ANIMISM

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OR

THOUGHT CURRENTS OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLES

BY

GEORGE WILLIAM GILMORE

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To my Son

PREFACE

THE result of recent historical studies, whether on anthropological, sociological, archeological, or religious lines, has brought into ever clearer vision as the substratum of all civilizations that stage of culture from which this book takes its title. One consequence is: general recognition of animism as a life factor, the power of which is not yet exhausted, the study of which fascinates because of its almost infinite variety and its persistent force. The words "animism," "animistic," have come to fall ever so lightly from tongue and pen and meet us at every turn. Yet what animism is few who use the term adequately realize. Though Sir E. B. Tylor in his imperishable monograph on *Primitive Culture* exhibited many of its phenomena and blocked out the main lines of investigation over forty years ago, comparatively few understand its significance or are acquainted with its manifestations even

yet. Fewer still comprehend the doings and beliefs as actual or realize the state of mind — operations of perception and reason — of those whose acts and beliefs we call animistic.

There seemed to be room, then, for a small volume which should exhibit the phenomena and the related and inferred beliefs of this complex stage in a simple manner, with sufficiently numerous citations to illustrate clearly, yet without the overlay of too abundant references. The references here given have been drawn almost entirely from very recent and authoritative sources gathered in the writer's own reading, easily accessible in the current of books on travel now pouring from the press. Most of the volumes to which reference has been made in this discussion belong to the twentieth century. Moreover these sources are primary. Recourse has seldom been had even to so valuable a collection of facts as Fraser's quite exhaustive *Golden Bough* in its third edition. The facts there adduced were employed by the talented author for quite another end than the present writer's, and this might easily have led to confusion.

What value a knowledge of the features of this agglomerate of acts and beliefs has be-

comes evident when it is remembered that over half the population of the globe is animistic in its main features of faith and action, that a large part of humanity entertains beliefs only one remove away from this and regards as fundamental a philosophy of life grounded in animistic thought, and that at least three basal tenets of Christianity itself are common to Christians and animists. Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, the larger part of the population of India, the North Asiatic tribes, Oceanicans, Africans, and American Indians are, or were recently, animists. No stage of culture, no great religion, has ever been able to disown some of the commonest heirlooms left by primitive modes of thinking. From the standpoints both of culture and of religion animism may be described (not defined) as the taproot which sinks deepest in racial human experience and continues its cellular and fibrous structure in the tree trunk of modern conviction. It is not less important than the surface roots of accrued beliefs that branch out on all sides, drawing a wide-sourced sustenance, while the taproot penetrates the subsoil of man's most intimate soul-substance.

Hardly less interesting is the fact that in

some fundamentals — religious and social — the advanced thought of the day is returning to some convictions essential to animistic culture. One would not be drawing the long bow were he to affirm that in that stage every act in life had a religious aspect. Nothing a man could do but might be regarded as either pleasing to spirits or the reverse. One might say that animists went far beyond Matthew Arnold's dictum that conduct is three-fourths of life — for them it embraced the whole of life. That is precisely what advanced thinkers are maintaining today, and in that tenet is the best promise for improvement in modern conditions among all classes.

In another aspect, too, the social, we are returning to early conceptions. Under totemism, the foundation of which is an animistic view of things non-human, the individualism that became so marked a feature in some philosophies of the last centuries and gave impetus even to revolutions was unknown. The characteristic of totemic and derived society was much nearer that slogan which has now advanced beyond the circle of purely socialistic propaganda: "Each for all and all for each."

Theologically also we find ourselves returning to old, old views of man's relation to the supernatural. The comparatively recent doctrine of sin is being discarded. The implacability of Deity, the notion of that Deity's infinity as the measure of offence, making of sin an enormity that clouds eternally the face of God and requires an infinite and exactly equivalent penalty, no longer holds the entire field. On the other hand, the act itself, its effect on the doer and his kind, its indelibility of effect on the one side, and the propitiability of the offended Spirit, his desire to have man reinstate himself in divine favor — the willingness to come more than half way (to state the matter in the language of every-day life) — are now standing out in relief.

It seems hardly necessary to remark that, of course, in all these cases the effect is not that of the return of a circle's circumference into itself. There has been marked, if spiral, progress, progress comparable to that of the earth in the solar system toward its distant goal in the constellation of Hercules. The one encouraging result of this study is that from the beginning the heart of man was essentially sound, though his vagaries were many during

the centuries in which he was feeling his way. To use a significant term, man has ever been essentially theotropic, though he was not always conscious of the direction of his tropism.

In studying this subject, then, we are engaged in discovering the paths our own ancestors have trodden, and our gratitude is due them for leading us with increasing certitude to a nobler way of thought, so that we see in the heavens not deities, but the work of One; and in the earth the effects of that same One's immanence, his gift to his sons and daughters.

The author takes this opportunity to acknowledge with gratitude the kindness of Mr. Francis Medhurst who has read all the proofs and offered many valuable suggestions.

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I

THE ANIMISTIC STAGE OF CULTURE — THE CASE STATED

ANIMISM

I

THE ANIMISTIC STAGE OF CULTURE — THE CASE STATED

THE following narrative, taken from *The Japan Weekly* for March 16, 1916, recounts the story of an event occurring in that land of "advanced civilization" in the winter of 1915–16, and some of the sequelæ.

Death of the Suma Snake

"The huge snake that had been leading a precarious existence at the Suma Garden during the last three years — a captive in a different clime from that in which it was born — recently died, unable to bear the rigours of the winter. Although the reptile was a magnificent specimen of its species, as it measured 25 feet in length and 28 inches round the thickest part, it never made itself unpleasantly obtrusive and most of its time at Suma was

spent in lethargic retirement. When the demise of the snake was made known in the neighbourhood much sympathy was manifested among its many acquaintances, who asked the management of the Garden to bury the snake in the vicinity with due ceremony. It was accordingly interred in the pine groves at the rear of the Kagetsu restaurant.

"Someone made the discovery on looking at an almanac that the day on which the reptile died was a Day of the Snake, and remembered an old superstition that toothache may be cured by worshipping a snake. The grave of the Suma snake consequently began to be visited by the superstitious, who proclaimed to the world the supernatural means of healing toothache by worshipping there. The report has since travelled far and wide, and scores of people are visiting the grave every day, bringing much gain to the Hyogo tramway, who need no faith to be assured of the benefits accruing from the virtues of the departed snake. Some of the people whose toothache has been cured by the spirit of the snake have decided to build a shrine on the ground where the reptile was buried. The place has already been fenced in and a sign

erected preparatory to the commencement of work."

The exhibit is therefore that of belief in the continued existence and exercise of benevolent activity on behalf of man of a snake which had according to our notions passed completely out of life and beyond any possible potency to affect human existence. It shows one of the characteristic phenomena of the stage of culture we are to examine, a stage which, as we shall discover, is a present fact over a large part of the globe.

In Gen. 28: 10–22 occurs the interesting account of a night in Jacob's life, his interpretation of it, and the ensuing course of action. The two noteworthy events, from the present point of view, are (1) the dream, with Jacob's conclusion that it revealed to him the fact that the place where he lay was an abiding place of deity; (2) the deity was evidently in the stone, or was the stone, as is shown by the anointing of it. This story could be paralleled in its essentials from many sources. Again, in Josh. 24: 27, Joshua is represented declaring of a certain stone: "it hath heard all the words, . . . it shall be

therefore a witness against you." And, once more, Acts 19: 35 makes mention of an object of worship which "fell from Jupiter," i.e., evidently a meteorite.

These three facts taken together, viz., the importance of a dream and the performance of worshipful acts upon or attribution of sentience to a stone, bring into notice a cultural condition, a method of thinking, which is by common consent called animistic. Animism is by many regarded as the earliest form which religion took, and as the root from which was derived all religious beliefs which the world has known, and was also the earliest basis of all that is dignified by the name of culture. Moreover, we may trace its effects and its action into the present.[1] Others, however, regard it as not the primary, but as a secondary, stage in mental and religious development, seeking the primary in a vaguer series of beliefs to which they give the name "naturism" or "dynamism." [2] Our present concern is with Animism.

[1] McDougall, *Body and Mind. A History and Defence of Animism.*

[2] Cf. Clodd, *Animism;* and Leuba, *A Psychological Study of Religion.*

And what is this? Menzies defines it as "the worship of spirits as opposed to that of Gods." [3] To this E. B. Tylor, whose work [4] is *facile princeps* among the expositions of animism, might object that it supposes a sharp dividing line between spirits and gods which has no existence in fact and is therefore arbitrarily drawn. It is, perhaps, impossible to state where the worship of spirits stops and that of gods begins, to decide exactly where the spirit shades into the deity. Who can say exactly the moment when the conception of a being which has been but one of a host of spirits has passed into that of a state of divinity? Such transitions have been made.[5] Accordingly, Tylor would define animism as "the doctrine of spirits or of spiritual beings." [6] He furthermore proposes as a minimum definition of religion "belief in spiritual beings." [7] While one may criticize this last as leaving out the objective result of "belief in spiritual beings" in worship or cult, Tylor

[3] *History of Religion*, p. 39.

[4] *Primitive Culture*, new ed., London, 1903.

[5] E.g., Enlil of Babylonia; cf. A. Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1887, p. 103.

[6] *Primitive Culture*, i. 425.

[7] Ib., i. 324.

is altogether right in asserting that, whatever the original condition of mankind, such belief is found among all races, even the lowest, concerning whom exact knowledge is possessed.

Just criticism may be passed, however, upon Tylor's definition of animism as so vague that it gives no grip upon the actual conditions which attend an animistic stage of thought or upon that thought itself. It is necessary, therefore, to point out that the word represents a stage in the psychological development of man, in his cultural unfolding, in which his conceptions (1) of himself and (2) of the world about him differ essentially from those of "civilized" man. From the point of view of modern psychology, he may be said to possess as yet only an unintegrated consciousness. He does not distinguish himself in kind from objects that are about him. As one writer declares:

"A Central Australian pointing to a photograph of himself will say, 'That one is just the same as me, so is a kangaroo (his totem).' We say the Central Australian 'belongs to the kangaroo tribe'; he knows better, he *is* kangaroo. Now it is this persistent affirmation of primitive man in the totemistic stage

that he *is* an animal or a plant, that he *is* a kangaroo or an opossum . . . that instantly arrests our attention," etc.[8]

To man in the advanced stage of thinking to which civilized peoples have attained such a condition as this appears almost unbelievable. And yet expert testimony to this effect is abundantly available. Thus Professor Hobhouse says of the thinking of men in this stage:

"One conception melts readily into another, just as in primitive fancy a sorcerer turns into a dragon, a mouse, a stone, and a butterfly without the smallest difficulty. Hence similarity is treated as if it were physical identity. The physical individuality of things is not observed. The fact that a thing was *mine* makes it appear as though there were something of *me* in it, so that by burning it you make me smart. The borders or limits of things are not marked out, but their influence and their capacity to be influenced extends, as it were, in a misty halo over everything connected with them in any fashion. If the attributes of things are made too solid and material in primitive thought, things themselves are too fluid and undefined, passing

[8] Miss Harrison, *Themis*, p. 121.

into each other by loose and easy identifications which prevent all clear and crisp distinctions of thought. In a word, primitive thought has not yet evolved those distinctions of substance and attribute, quality and relation, cause and effect, identity and difference, which are the common property of civilized thought. These categories which among us every child soon comes to distinguish in practice are for primitive thought interwoven in wild confusion, and this confusion is the intellectual basis of animism and of magic." [9]

The idea is expressed similarly by Aston:

"I would describe (primitive man's) mental attitude as a piecemeal conception of the universe as alive, just as he looks upon his fellow man as alive without analyzing him into the two distinct entities of body and soul." [10]

The "piecemeal conception of the universe" contains the idea that animistic man regards other objects in the world about him as being on a parity of existence with himself in that they are conceived as having sentient and volitional life. He interprets all things in terms of his own consciousness. On the

[9] Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution*, ii. 20–21.

[10] *Shinto*, p. 26.

other hand, practically all the data in our possession which bear upon the subject indicate that as far back as we can trace man, he had already analyzed his kind into body and soul. Even Neolithic man, and with great probability also Palæolithic man, had the conception of a possessing or obsessing spirit. The trepanning done by Neolithic man during life is most easily explicable on the theory that disease was caused by a spirit which had obsessed the sick, and was to be conjured forth only after an incision had been made in the skull. The fact that Kabyles have been known within the memory of man to perform this operation for this reason, and that the *modus operandi* is in accord with other methods among primitive races, can lead at once to this conclusion. Up to 1888 there had been discovered in France in the valley of the Torn over two hundred trepanned skulls, in many cases among these the trepanning was *ante mortem*, with evident signs of healing. And in the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum in London there is a case of flint instruments some of which almost equal in sharpness of edge and point surgical instruments of our own day, used, it is believed

for this purpose.[11] We shall find other reasons for believing in the early discovery by man of his own soul. Meanwhile to prove that is not our purpose here. What we are concerned with is man's outlook on the universe, his estimate of what we call nature.

"Man in that stage (i.e., the animistic) may hold that a stone, a tree, a mountain, a stream, a wild animal, a heavenly body, a wind, an instrument of the hunt or of labor or of domestic utility — indeed, any object within the range of real or fancied existence (and fancy looms large in this domain) — possesses just such a soul as he conceives himself to have, and that it is animated by desires, moved by emotions, and empowered by abilities parallel to those he perceives in himself."[12]

Testimonies to this fact might be adduced from many quarters and illustrated in many ways. Thus: "The African does not believe in anything soulless, he even regards matter itself as a form of soul, low because not lively."[13]

[11] Cf. *New York Medical Journal*, Oct. 16, 1909, p. 751; *British Congregationalist*, May 28, 1914; *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, iii. 193–194.

[12] *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, iii. 194; cf. Bros, *La Religion des peuples non-civilisés*, chap. II.

[13] Miss Kingsley, *West African Studies*, p. 199.

Père Lejeune says that the savages of New France "se persuadent que non seulement les hommes et les autres animaux, mais que les autres choses sont animées."[14] E. S. Hartland puts it this way: "Starting from his personal consciousness, the savage attributes the like consciousness to everything he sees or feels around him."[15] And Reinach is equally emphatic:

"Animism gives a soul and a will to mountains, rivers, rocks, trees, stones, the heavenly bodies, the earth and sky. A tree, a post, a pillar, the hollow of a rock, are the seat or throne of invisible spirits. These spirits are conceived and figured at a later stage under animal form, and then under human form. A spring was . . . Pegasus, Apollo's horse. . . . A river is a bull with a human face. . . . The laurel was Daphne, whom Apollo had pursued; the oak was Zeus himself, before being the tree of Zeus, and Dionysos was supposed to live in the tree, after he had ceased to be himself the tree. The earth was Gæa, emerging from the soil in the shape of a woman who implores the sky to water her."[16]

[14] *Relations de la Nouvelle France*, p. 199.
[15] *Legend of Perseus*, ii. 441. [16] *Orpheus*, p. 79.

Thus, to give one final testimony, Im Thurn says of the Indians of Guiana:

"It is absolutely necessary to premise here that all tangible objects, animate . . . and inanimate alike, consist each of two separable parts — a body and a spirit; and that these are not only always readily separable involuntarily, as in death, and daily in sleep, but are also, in certain individuals, always voluntarily separable."[17]

The preceding, then, affords a *prima facie* basis for a tentative definition of animism, the justification or demonstration of which must wait for a later chapter. We assume that "animism" stands for *a stage of culture in which man may regard any object, real or imaginary, as possessing emotional, volitional, and actional potency like that he himself possesses.* Things, of whatsoever sort, he may consider the subjects of feelings — likes and dislikes, appetites or disinclinations, affections or antipathies, desires and longings; of will — to help or injure, to act or refrain from acting; and of the power to act according to the promptings of these feelings and the determinations of will.

[17] Im Thurn, *Indians of Guiana*, p. 329.

But — animism is thought. The enormous significance of these three words must not be overlooked. They mark the difference between man and the whole creation beneath him. The whole chain of acts implied in the word under discussion involves mental processes passing over into action with well defined intention having their issue in the future and being immeasurably removed from instinct. It is true that we shall find this thought at times pitifully infantile, paralleled by the conceptions in some cases of four-year-olds of the present;[18] but it is still thought. And we shall show that reason is on the throne. The outcome of this discussion will, it is believed, show the general logicality of primitive man's mental processes, once the basis from which he starts is granted. The beliefs in ghosts, spirits, gods, in transmigration and metempsychosis, are not the chance hit or miss conclusions of early man, but flow rationally from the premise we have assumed. That

[18] The Chicago *Tribune* reports that "during a sudden thunderstorm a little four-year-old came running into the Kindergarten, crying as if her heart would break. When the Kindergartner asked the cause of her trouble, she said, 'O Miss E., the sky barked at me.'"

this reason is often aberrant in its premises, that it is not seldom fitfully inconsequent, may indeed appear. But what we find is reason, thought at least of a kind, and in many cases frightfully logical.

II

THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOUL

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ON THE hypothesis that the method of man's creation was evolution, that he is the finest product of nature's forces working in continuous upward striving, how are we to explain man's arrival at the realization of soul or spirit, of something which is intelligently and not merely instinctively directive of action? The possession of soul, in this sense, by even the highest animals is disallowed by scientists; though recognition is growing that elements that are acknowledged to belong to the intellectual and even to the moral powers already exist in brute psychology. Such elements are shame or chagrin, and fear of what seems to the animal what we might call the uncanny. The writer remembers a scene in Meadville, Pa., where as reminiscences of a former iron foundry there exist in some of the dooryards castings of dogs. One day notice was attracted by a street cur which had stopped a few feet distant from one of these cast-iron dogs. The cur was

"pointing" at the image and wagging rapidly his short tail in the manner of dogs intimating friendly intentions towards another dog, and desire for acquaintance with it. Seeing no hostile demonstrations on the part of the acquaintance-to-be, he went up to the iron replica slowly, smelt of it, and at once dropped his apology for a tail and made off with chagrin plainly stamped in his entire demeanor. Mr. Romanes tells of a trick on a pet dog that was fond of playing with bones, which it would worry and toss and growl at, evidently making believe that they were alive. The owner tied a thin but strong thread to the bone with which it was one day playing, and after a little time, when the dog had cast the bone some distance away and was creeping up to it as to an object of prey, he began gently to pull the string. The manner of the dog changed at once, first evidently in surprise; then it continued to crawl up to investigate. But as the bone continued to retreat, the dog finally withdrew and hid under the furniture.[1] The animal evidently recognized (1) that the bone was lifeless, inert, therefore (2) unendowed with power of motion. But (3) this thing had moved, and fear (dread

[1] Cited by Clodd, in *Animism*, pp. 22–23.

of the unknown) entered evidently as the result of a sort of rational process. It will be noted that this case is to be differentiated from those where fear enters as the result of punishment, in which case the "fear" may be only the result of association of ideas and the formation of "instinctive" habit. There was manifestation of chagrin in the first case cited, for such was the clear impression furnished when the animal looked back at the witnesses of the scene as they burst into laughter; and of fear in the second case, since the animal showed what in a human being we should call superstitious apprehension. There is therefore no adequate reason for denying to primeval man a large degree of rationality, growing in extension and intension with enlarging experience and exercise. He was no longer sheer animal. Of course, it was by achievement of rationality, in however small degree, that he became man. He was no longer a mere observer — animals are observant — but a thinker, who reflected and reasoned, however faultily, upon his observations. The salient mark of his differentiation from the animal lies in his recognition of possession of this quality. Before this, re-

lapse into sheer animality was perhaps possible; after it, such relapse is inconceivable. How then did this come about?

The answer most in favor with anthropologists is that it began (1) with the phenomena of sleep — (a) the evident difference between that state and waking life, combined with (b) the occurrence of dreams which often so closely mimic or deal with the active and conscious existence of the individual;[2] and (2) in the difference between the living and the dead. It is to be recognized that (1a) and (2) are compared and combined in the logic of the savage, and afford new ground for his belief in something apart from and different from the body which eventually becomes known as soul. Through observation often repeated, and through reasoning and reflection upon the facts thus presented, man arrived at the conclusion that he is himself a dual being, possessing body and (what was eventually recognized as) soul or spirit. Having arrived at this conclusion, he deduced from

[2] Cf. the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and of his baker, as narrated in Gen. 39; each of the individuals dreams of matters connected with his specific duties.

experience and observation, or else jumped to the conclusion, that other objects were similarly constituted; he might attribute life, soul, intention, and action to each and every object, to any object, that came under his observation, no matter what its constitution. It may be remarked, *en passant*, that the dream life of man is separated from that of animals probably only by the character of the content of his dream, as it reproduces or recomposes experiences registered in the (conscious or unconscious, subliminal) memory. It is well known that some animals dream. The twitching of the muscles or the whining or even barking of a dog in sleep has often been noticed, and is explicable best on the hypothesis of a dream. If animals dream and exhibit elements of consciousness, there is every reason to carry back to a very early period in human history the beginning of the chain of thinking that, on the hypothesis here presented, led to the conception of spirit or soul as animating physical objects.

How this could come about is abundantly illustrated from the interpretations of dream phenomena by primitive peoples. The dream life of a savage being is conditioned by his

waking existence, it mirrors more or less perfectly the life he leads. It is very probable that the dreams of savages mimic even more closely the waking existence than those of man in a more advanced stage of culture. The reason for this is that the primitive mode of existence is less complex. Fewer elements of interest go to make up life, and the course of events is more uniform. Mr. F. Granger remarks: "If yesterday was like the day before, and is going to be repeated in a thousand tomorrows, the dreams which echo the life of the past will presage, with fair accuracy, the life of the days to come. Add to all this that the primitive mind distinguishes with difficulty [we should prefer to say, distinguishes not at all] between what is real and what is imagined [i.e., to the savage the dream and the vision of the night are equally real with the sights and experiences of his waking hours] and we can understand why the dream existence is often placed on a level with that of waking hours.[3] Lying down to rest, the savage dreams of the chase or of the search for vegetable food. On awaking he tells his

[3] *Worship of the Romans*, pp. 28–29; cf. Fiske, *Myths and Myth-makers*, p. 18.

companions that he has been away on a hunt or the like, and relates the adventures through which he believes he has passed. But his companions assure him that his body has been with them all the time, and both he and they naturally deduce a dual existence — an invisible soul, usually inhabiting but on occasion leaving a visible body.[4] Here then is one almost certain source of the idea of soul.

How conclusive such reasoning is to the primitive mind, how firmly the savage believes in the dream as consisting of actual experience, may be seen in the comparatively exhaustive collection of cases by Dr. J. G. Frazer.[5] Thus an Indian dreamed that at his master's orders he had (during the night) hauled a canoe up a series of rapids, and next morning reproached the master for making him work so hard in the hours appropriated to rest.[6] To this savage the dream was real and the toil exhausting. Of the actuality of the belief in the absence of the soul during sleep there is abundant evidence. Numerous peoples in a

[4] Cf. Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection*, ii. 122, 135–136. Gomes, *Seventeen Years among the Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, p. 177.

[5] *Taboo*, chap. V.

[6] *Ib.*, pp. 36, 37; cf. Gomes, *Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, p. 161.

lowly stage of culture use caution in awaking a sleeper. It is held that his soul is away, and that he must be aroused gradually so that the soul may have time to return; the same reasoning applies to infants.[7] Melanesians explain the phenomena of a fainting fit in the same way, holding that such cases indicate premature death, but that the soul was not yet wanted in the spirit world and so was sent back to earth.[8]

A different source of the idea of soul is found in the phenomena of death, powerfully reënforcing the deductions made from sleep and dreams. While in the one case there was seen the inertness of the body, perhaps with breathing hardly perceptible, which yet was experiencing dreams that were interpreted as the activity of the absent soul; in the other there was noted the expiring breath and the subsequent inertness of the body, only more pronounced than in sleep, passing into rigidity and finally into decay. Action had ceased with that last exhalation. If in sleep the dream was interpreted as absence of

[7] Frazer, *Taboo*, pp. 39–42; Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 18; Seligmann, *Melanesians*, pp. 189 ff.

[8] Brown, *Melanesians*, pp. 192 ff.

soul, much more applicable would that interpretation seem when the bystanders had noted the last breath and the (consequent) absence of motion, action, speech, life. Something had gone away with the last sigh, something unseen, the absence of which brought about a great change. That man lying there — companion, husband, father, brother, friend — used to live and move and talk and breathe. He was wont to respond to call and to react to the various stimuli about him. Now calls were unheard, appeals brought no reply, promptings met no response. And the difference was brought about (so men reasoned) by the absence of that which had issued forth unseen, never to return, at least to its former home, as survivors would observe.

But the full consequences of observance of the phenomena of death in the direction under investigation are not seen till we take into account certain other phases of human fallibility. Particularly is it necessary to note primitive man's relatively smaller experience and confused perceptions, and the aberrant conclusions often drawn from these.[9]

Most men are and always have been defi-

[9] Granger, *Worship of the Romans*, pp. 28–29.

cient in power both of observation and of deduction. (1) They assume as real many things that do not exist, events that do not occur, and relations that have no reality. Illustrations are found in the belief in the existence of a directive power in the object picked up by the fetish worshiper, the superstition of the Celt that a fairy has left in the place of his own baby a fairy changeling,[10] and the belief in the descent of a human gens from, e.g., eagle, fox, or snake, as in totemism. Similarly boys of Mafulu, New Guinea, while making a drum must drink only what is found in axils of certain plants, else the embers which are to hollow out their drums will not burn — drinking any other water will put it out, or certain other restrictions are felt to be necessary.[11] (2) They take obvious facts and interpret them wrongly. Thus in the mediæval ordeal of the sacrament (a late example chosen only because of its familiarity, but exemplifying perfectly earlier conditions; the phenomena can be parallelled in any quarter of the world and every grade of culture) the sacramental wafer was employed

[10] Rhys, *Celtic Folk-lore*, p. 102.

[11] Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, pp. 258–259.

as a proof of innocence or guilt. Constriction of the throat and inability to swallow was often the result of the administration of the wafer. If it did not result, deity was held to have shown the innocence of the accused; if it did, guilt was declared manifest. How really irrelative this test was to the facts is shown by the frequent experience of inability to swallow a medicinal pill or tablet without the aid of a liquid to "wash it down." Yet here is no question of innocence or guilt. The explanation is that attention to the act of swallowing (which is usually effortless and automatic) causes effort and so constriction. Swallowing in the ordeal was doubtless sometimes impossible just for the reason given here; but deity did not intervene, guilt or innocence was not necessarily revealed by this fact, nor did inability to swallow necessarily result from guilt — the innocent might also find the task difficult simply because of the attention directed to it.

On the difference in respect of observational and reasoning power of savage and highly civilized man let Grant Allen speak.

"To us the conception of human life as a relatively short period, bounded by a known

duration, and naturally terminated at a fixed end, is a common and familiar one. We forget, however, that to the savage this is quite otherwise. He lives in a small and scattered community, where deaths are rare, and where natural death is comparatively infrequent. Most of his people are killed in war, or devoured by wild beasts, or destroyed by accident in the chase, or by thirst or starvation. Some are drowned in rapid rivers; some crushed by falling trees or stones; some poisoned by deadly fruits, or bitten by venomous snakes; some massacred by chiefs or murdered in quarrels with their own tribesmen. In a large majority of instances there is some open and obvious cause of death, and this cause is generally due either to the hand of man or to some other animal; or failing that, to some apparently active effort of external nature, such as flood or lightning or forest fires or landslip or earthquake." [12]

Man recognized his own volitional agency in causing death in the chase or in personal conflicts. So to each of the agencies which had produced disaster he attributed powers like his own — the volitional behind the

[12] *Evolution of the Idea of God*, pp. 44–45.

physical. He had, perhaps, himself narrowly escaped the fate he had seen befall others and ascribed his escape to his own cleverness. But not all of his acquaintances had suffered what we should call a violent death. Some had passed away in disease or even in old age. Surely it was evident, one would say, that no external cause was at work there. But that was not his way of thinking. He knew of unseen powers that send or are the wind, the storm, the lightning.[13] And so the body that was racked with pain and eventually became inert in death was held to be tortured by an invisible something. In many cases, he knew, death resulted from external violence; in all cases, he reasoned, the great change was wrought by powers external to the victim, which sometimes worked with invisible weapons.[14]

Bearing in mind, then, the faulty observation and logic of primitives, and connecting the two sources of the idea of soul previously discussed, viz. (1) sleep and dreams, and (2) the phenomenon of death, together with

[13] The Ekoi of South Africa regard thunder as a giant who strides across the heavens, while lightning is either his servant or his enemy. Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 73.

[14] See chapter IX for cases of disbelief in natural death.

(3) the inference therefrom of a something that leaves the body either temporarily in sleep or permanently in death, we are brought to notice next what apparently corroborated the evidence (as it would seem) respecting the existence of soul, that is, the appearance in dreams of those who had died. This was in all probability a more frequent occurrence with early than with modern man, because of the smaller content of his experience and the consequent more frequent repetition of its elements. We have already remarked that the distinction between reality and fancy, fact and the merely apparent, is often missed in early cultural stages. It was quite in accordance with natural logic to reason that the apparition in the dream was real. The dead, therefore, still lived, had been seen, and had possibly engaged in conversation, The wandering spirit of the dreamer had met the disembodied spirit; or the latter had visited his former friends while they slept.[15] The tremendous consequences flowing from these beliefs will be developed a little later.

By these various experiences, dovetailing and appearing to force a conclusion, man

[15] Lang, *The Making of Religion*, pp. 54 ff.

certainly in a very primitive stage of culture drew the inference that he was a duality — the body which he could see and feel, and a something of which in his conscious existence he knew nothing except that it existed. Moreover, it is demonstrable that among many primitive peoples the priority in importance is assigned to the spirit. Thus of the New Guineans it is affirmed: "These and other things [specified in the context] seem to show that a sharp distinction is drawn between body and spirit by the natives. Certainly the body gains from long associations virtues from the indwelling spirit; but it is the spirit which is the real man, higher than, and superior to, the body in which the spirit dwells."[16]

One can not go far astray if he maintain that it was the discovery of the soul which was the most momentous in the history of the human race; to it must be traced all man's uplift in the millenniums of his existence.

[16] Newton, *In Far New Guinea*, p. 194.

III

THE SOUL'S NATURE

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THE SOUL'S NATURE

AN important inquiry meets us at this point: How did man think of this second something that usually inhabited his body but sometimes left it for a time and at death left it permanently? For it would soon have been borne in upon him (even though he did not consciously recognize the soul's presence and operations) that the permanent absence of soul meant death, and that therefore while he lived it was present. What did he think concerning the nature of this all-important part of him? It is very clear from a number of circumstances that the notion of the soul was governed by the phenomenon of death. Decisive upon this point is the wonderful accord of meaning in so many languages of the word which expresses this inner elusive reality. In the developed languages we may note the root idea of such words as the Latin *spiritus*, *anima*, *animus*,

Irish *anam*, Sanskrit *atman*, Greek *psyche*, *pneuma*, *thumos*, German *Geist*, Dutch *geest*, English *ghost*, Hebrew *nephesh*, *ruaḥ*, Sumerian *zid*, Babylonian *napishtu*, Egyptian *kneph*, all of which go back to the notion of breath, or of a gentle movement of air or wind. One may forage at large and observe the same root notion and a similar usage in many other different regions, discovering the Australian *wang*, Mohawk *atonritz*, Californian-Oregonian *wkrisha*, *piuts*, Dakotan *niya*, Javanese *nawa*, Aztec *ehecatl*, Nicaraguan *julio*, Gypsy *duk*, and Finnish *far*. This line of thought is fortified by the conception of the insubstantiality of the soul, expressed in such words as *skia*, *umbra*, and "shade," used to denote the disembodied spirit. Terms of similar content were used not only by the cultured Greeks and Romans, but are known to be employed among North American Indians, Zulus and Basutos in Africa, among the Calabars, and elsewhere. One recalls the Hebrew *rephaim*. The survival of the belief in the insubstantiality of the disembodied spirit till the Middle Ages is shown by Dante, for according to him the souls in purgatory knew that the poet had not passed through death

by the fact that his figure cast a shadow. Indeed, the idea of communication by a disembodied spirit with the living in dreams was entrenched by the reflection that its very immateriality enabled it to hold communication with sleeping persons without arousing them from sleep.

How early man came to realize that this part which is designated by breath or puff of air is his real self is impossible to say. But what is significant is that in many languages the word meaning spirit, life, or breath has also the connotation "self," as has, e.g., the Hebrew *nephesh*. And how natural such a signification is can be illustrated by the concrete fact that Laura Bridgman, the blind-deaf-mute, is said to have expressed the thought of death in a dream by the statement that "God took away my breath to heaven." Among the Ekoi of Nigeria ghost and soul and breath are connected as phases of the same thing or as equivalents. One must not forget that the phenomenon of death which is most obvious is the expiring sigh or last breath, after the departure of which life ceases to exist. What more natural than that the breath thus finally exhaled should be associated

with the soul or spirit, or, as in some cases, be thought to carry the soul with it? Since in dreams a person deceased has been seen and addressed while the body was known to have dissolved, the way is direct and the step short to the conclusion that the self, the real person, is that same breath or soul.[1]

But did primitive peoples endow the soul with form? The testimony to this is abundant and cogent.[2] The most natural and perhaps most common idea of the soul's shape is that it is a miniature of the possessor's form. Among those who have held this belief are American Indians such as the Hurons, the natives of British Columbia, Alaska, and the Esquimaux of the districts adjacent to Behring Straits, islanders such as the Niassians near Sumatra and the Fijians, and continental dwellers such as the Malays and West Africans. To give a single example, Nigerian Etoi believe that "when a man's body decays a new form comes out of it, in every way like the man himself when he was above ground." [3]

[1] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 230.

[2] It has been collected not only by Tylor in his *Primitive Culture*, but also by Frazer, *Taboo*, chap. II.

[3] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 17, 230; cf. Frazer, *Taboo*, p. 39.

For the Egyptians abundant testimony is available as to the belief in the double, existing indeed from birth.[4] There is a picture in the Roman catacombs portraying the death of a Christian, in which the soul is represented as leaving the mouth of the dying in a cloud-like shape that takes his own form. What is practically a replica of this is found on the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa; and in the east transept of Salisbury Cathedral on the sculptured monument over the tomb of Bishop Giles de Bridgport the soul appears as a naked figure carried by an angel.[5] The usual notion is that the soul is invisible. But as in other respects shamans or medicine men are credited with extraordinary powers, so they are supposed to be able to discern the spirits or souls moving about or endeavoring to escape from the body. Sometimes the organ of detection is the ear, which can note the motion of the soul's wings. Or, the soul being of human shape, it leaves faint foot-marks as indications of its presence, and light

[4] A notable case among many is the bas-relief in the temple at Luxor, exhibiting the presentation at birth to Ra of the royal child Amenhotep III and his double. Cf. Budge, *Osiris*, etc., p. 119.

[5] Clodd, *Animism*, p. 40.

ashes strewn on the ground may betray its presence to the keen-sighted medicine man.

Mention has been made of the return of the soul of one deceased to the haunts of the body as evidenced by dreams. The form appearing in the dream was recognized as that of a friend, again testifying to the assumed fact that the soul has the shape of the body. Further testimony to this belief is found in the faith that the soul is held to suffer in some degree the fate of the body. Brazilian Indians, for example, believe that the soul arrives in the other world hacked and torn, or uninjured, exactly as was the condition of the body at death.[6] Australians tie together the toes and bind together the thumbs behind the back, or mutilate the body and fill it with stones, or, again, they lop off the thumb of a slain enemy, that the ghost may not hurl shadowy spear or pull the bowstring in the land of spirits.[7] Chinese and Africans abhor mutilation, especially decapitation, as a punishment, for the latter produces headless ghosts.[8] And Shakespeare makes Macbeth cry out:

[6] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, passim.

[7] Cases of the kind are cited in Frazer, *The Dying God*, pp. 10–11; and Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 449, 474.

[8] Cf. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, pp. 281–282.

"Shake not thy GORY locks at me." The ghost retains the bloody form in which the body was left at its departure. From classical Greece and Rome the evidence for this same idea of the soul's form is abundant and cogent; and it would not be difficult to show, since so much has been revealed in the frescoes and vase paintings recovered in the Mediterranean region, that this idea comes down from very primitive times. In the paintings which represent Hermes Psychopompus directing the issue and return of souls, the latter are figured as winged mannikins, coming from or returning to burial jars.[9] The form of Patroklos' shade was that of the living hero.[10]

A notion closely akin to the foregoing is that which connects the soul with the shadow. While many curious ideas which gather around the latter — such as the Brahman belief that the shadow of a pariah falling on food defiles it — do not involve the identity of the two, in many cases there can be little doubt that soul and shadow are not only closely related but are regarded as identical. Some believe that an assault upon the shadow may be fatal

[9] Harrison, *Prolegomena*, p. 43, and *Themis*, p. 205.
[10] *Iliad*, xxiii. 65 ff.

to its possessor, or at least extremely harmful. The Indians of the lower Frazer River hold that man has four souls, of which one is the shadow. The Euahlayi of Australia believe that man has a dream spirit, a shadow spirit, perhaps an animal spirit, and one that leaves only at death.[11] Other Australians consider that each individual has a *choi*, a sort of disembodied soul, and a *ngai*, which lives in the heart. The *choi* awaits reincarnation after death, the *ngai* passes immediately after death into the children of the deceased. It is the latter that sometimes leaves a person temporarily in his lifetime, e.g., when he faints. The *choi* has some sort of vague relationship with the shadow.[12] The Kai of New Guinea also believe that man has two souls,[13] as do some of the Fijians, one of these being light (as a reflection in the water), the other dark, like the shadow.[14] Dyaks assert the possession of three or even of seven, souls; one may leave the body temporarily, the man dies only when all leave.[15]

[11] Mrs. Parker, *Euahlayi Tribe*, p. 35.

[12] Frazer, *Belief in Immortality*, i. 129.

[13] Neuhass, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. 112.

[14] Williams, *Fiji*, i. 242.

[15] Gomes, *Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, p. 177; cf. Hastings, *ERE*, vi. 226.

Gilyaks may have three souls. The Balong of the Cameroon think that one may have several souls, one in his own body and others in different animals. The death of one of these animals, say, at the hand of a hunter causes the man's death.[16] The equivalence of the shadow to the man himself is proved by its use (or that of its dimensions, in a later stage of culture) in the same manner as the body in foundation sacrifice — to give stability to the structure. After an exactly similar manner of thought the reflection of a body in water or a mirror is regarded as the soul. Injury to reflection or shadow may result in injury to the corresponding member of the body. Among the Congo people shadow or picture or reflection is the equivalent of soul.[17] This whole manner of thought explains why in so many regions the natives do not willingly submit to being photographed or represented on canvas.[18]

While the usual mode of thought represents

[16] Globus, lxix (1896), 277, cited in Hastings, *ERE*, iv. 412–413.

[17] Weeks, *Among Congo Cannibals*, p. 162; cf. Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 230.

[18] Cases cited in Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Part II; *Taboo*, ii. 77–100.

the human soul as a mannikin, other ideas are found. Among the ancient Egyptians, in Brazil, in Melanesia, in Bohemia, Malaysia, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, and elsewhere the shape of the spirit may be that of a bird;[19] in British Columbia the bird is enclosed in an egg in the nape of the neck. Or the soul may take the form of a mouse (Brunswick, Transylvania, Swabia, Saxony), which may differ in color in different regions; or of a fly (Transylvania), a lizard (India), or an indistinct cloudy form (Scotland).[20] Greeks and Serbs thought of the soul also as a butterfly, and the Greek name for one species of this insect is Psyche.

As to the constitution of this part of man's duality there is a wide consensus along the lines already indicated. Primitive peoples throughout the world describe it as a vapor, a shadowy, filmy substance, related to the body as the perfume to the flower. It is pale and yielding to the touch, without flesh and bone, thin, impalpable, discerned as the figure in the human eye. Its movements may be

[19] Bros, *La Religion des peuples non-civilisés*, p. 54.

[20] Miller, *My Schools and Schoolmasters*, pp. 106–107, cited by Frazer, *Taboo*, pp. 40–41; Brown, *Melanesians*, pp. 141 ff.— here bird, rat, lizard, etc., are forms the soul takes.

as swift as the wind, and so it is sometimes regarded as winged. Yet it has a certain materiality, and consequently has necessities. After death, for instance, it needs nourishment and partakes of the spirit, the essential part, of the material things sometimes provided for it. Egyptians, carrying the idea still further, provided pictures or models of food, furniture, and the like, which in a similar way became available to the spirit. The semi-materiality of the soul is illustrated by the fact of the return to his temple being known by marks alleged to be found in maize flour strewed on the threshold of his temple-pyramid.[21]

[21] Spence, *Civilization of Ancient Mexico*, p. 47.

IV

THE EXTERNAL OR SEPARABLE SOUL

IV

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IF what precedes be accepted, it can be taken as established that primitive man, or at least man in an early stage of culture, determined himself to be a duality, soul and body. But the two constituents did not appear to be inseparably connected. The soul might leave the body, either temporarily or permanently, and in the latter case the body perished. The presence of the soul is therefore essential to life. But incidentally reference has been made to the absence of the soul for periods usually brief. In fact, primitive races hold that the soul absents itself voluntarily at times, goes on travels, performs tasks, and the like; and also that some have the power to send forth the soul — their own or others' — for their own purposes. It may even happen that the soul is either lured forth or departs unwisely, and has to return. In New Guinea when a person faints,

he is said to be dead; and when he revives, the explanation is that he "died green," and perhaps because the soul was not wanted in the spirit land, it had to take up again its old life with the body.[1] For the wandering of the soul in dreams there is abundant testimony, — so abundant, in fact, that we will content ourselves with a single reference.[2] The Japanese are persuaded that this same constituent of personality leaves the body that it may sport itself untrammelled.[3] The satirist Lucian and the scientist Pliny relate the story of the seer Hermotimus, who sent forth his spirit to explore distant regions. At last, during an unwontedly long absence, his wife supposed him to be dead and burned his body, so that on its return the spirit found no dwelling for itself.[4] A slightly different case is that reported of the Scandinavian chief Ingimund, who shut up three Finns that their spirits might visit Iceland, discover the lie of the land where he proposed to settle, and report to him on their return. An in-

[1] Newton, *In Far New Guinea*, p. 220.

[2] Kingsley, *West African Studies*, pp. 200 ff.

[3] Griffis, *Mikado's Empire*, p. 472.

[4] Cited by Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, i. 439; cf. Jevons, *Introduction*, pp. 44 ff., and the cases there cited.

stance like that of Hermotimus is the case of Epimenides, the Cretan prophet and magician, who was reputed to be able to dispatch his spirit in quest of knowledge and recall it at will.[5] And Hermotimus had in recent years an African disciple, whose exploits were worthy, if reports are to be credited, of his unknown master.[6]

Since belief in the absence of the soul, at least for a temporary period, could be held over so wide an area and even among comparatively developed peoples, it is not surprising that there should arise a belief in the existence of the animating spirit seated not in the body, but in some place where security would be greater. The evidences are many of a belief that the soul might reside either from birth or from some later period in some object other than its normal home. This is the phenomenon known to anthropologists as the "external" or "separable" soul. A dilution of this is the form which is christened "the life token," in which the clouding of a liquid or the tarnishing of a weapon is the sign either of danger, sickness, or death of the

[5] Hesychius, *Lexikon*, under "Epimenides."
[6] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 231.

person for whom the liquid or object stands. It can be shown, however, in most cases, that when the life token is the center of the story, it is the result of an advanced stage of culture, if it is not directly stated that such object is the residence of the soul.

The earliest example of this belief so far known to literature occurs in the Egyptian tale of "Anpu and Bata, or the Two Brothers."[7] The younger brother commits his soul apparently to the keeping successively of acacia flowers, of a bull, and then of two trees, while a chip from one of the latter causes conception. Another view of the latter experiences, however, is that they are cases of transmigration. The case of the Balong of the Cameroons who believe that a man may have several souls, one in his own body and others in different animals of the jungle, has already been cited. It is quite usual for them to account for a man's sudden death by supposing that one of his soul-containing animals has been killed by a hunter.[8] Frequent in folk-lore is the theme of the wicked and oppressive ogre or giant or wizard who

[7] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, 2d series, pp. 48 ff.

[8] *Globus*, 69 (1896), 277, cited in Hastings, *ERE*, 4, 412–413.

holds in his power maiden or youth, and is invincible to ordinary attack because his soul is safe-guarded in an egg inside a duck that swims on a pond in a distant island guarded by a dragon within a walled and inaccessible fortress. Not until the many obstacles have been overcome and the egg obtained is the luckless maiden or youth released by the crushing of the egg and the consequent immediate demise of ogre, giant, or wizard. This theme of a receptacle strongly guarded (though in this case it is not a soul, but the "Book of Thoth," a book of magic) comes, curiously enough, in its earliest form from Egypt, and suggests that this idea of an object, and perhaps the separable soul, secured by many safeguards, may have been a particularly widely diffused idea. The "Book of Thoth" was in an iron box, which enclosed successively one of bronze, of kété-wood, of ivory and ebony, of silver, and last of gold, the entire nest being in the middle of the river, surrounded by snakes, scorpions, and "all manner of creeping things," and above all by a snake that no man could kill — which however a man did kill. In this case, as in most of those in folk-lore where the soul is sup-

posedly unassailable, the conquest is effected through magic.[9]

In many cases the story has to do with the miraculous birth (not always virgin birth, however) of twins or triplets, simultaneous with which appears some plant or tree or other object which is the repository of the soul or is the "life-token." The fading or withering of bloom or plant here indicates disaster. Sometimes, instead of the plants, weapons (which undergo modernization in successive generations of story-tellers) spring up, or a spring wells forth, and in them reside the souls of the children. Then if hilt falls from sword or sheen tarnishes on blade, or if lock looses from gun or the clear water of the spring begins to run clouded, the event betokens danger or catastrophe to the possessor of the soul.[10] In the *Ramayana*, Garuda says to Rama: "I am thy friend, thy life free-

[9] The story of the Book of Thoth is told in Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii. 89 ff.; Spiegelberg, *Demotische Papyrus;* and Murray, *Ancient Egyptian Legends*, pp. 31 ff.

[10] A number of interesting cases exhibiting these phenomena, not usually cited in the books can be found in Parker, *Village Folk Tales of Ceylon* (e.g., i. 164, 166–168, 190, *et passim*); Day, *Folk-Tales of Bengal*, pp. 2, 6, 85–86, 189, 253, etc.; *Indian Antiquary*, i. 86, 117, xvii. 54; Steel, *Tales of the Punjab*, pp. 52, 55, 75, etc.

ranging, external to thyself." [11] It may be sufficient here, without going further into details in this interesting subject, to note that a considerable number of folk-tales of this and kindred types have been brought together and their points of similarity and difference discussed in Hartland's fascinating volumes,[12] a work which is urged upon all who wish to note the salient characteristics of this fertile field. It is interesting to remark that a new area for the existence of this curious belief has recently been discovered in the far north, since it is a part of the mental possessions of the Tshimsheans of Alaska.[13]

If it be objected that the principal evidence for all this is found in the region of *Märchen*, of folk-tale, and therefore purely imaginative, the reply is: even were this all, it shows a mode of thought and possibilities of conception, of psychological activity. But above all this, we can adduce the fact that transition to actual belief is furnished by the many cases in which a tree is planted when a child is born, and the life of tree and child are thought

[11] Nivedita, *Myths of Hindus*, p. 82.
[12] *The Legend of Perseus*, 3 vols.
[13] Arctander, *Apostle of Alaska*, p. 93.

to be intimately connected. The Maori bury the navel cord or the placenta and plant a tree over the spot, and the latter becomes the life token.[14] Similarly, in Old Calibar the burial of the placenta and planting of a tree are conjoined.[15] In Pomerania a tree already growing is employed. Similar beliefs may be cited from Western Africa, Oceanica (e.g., Banks Islands[16]), Madagascar, Russia, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and England, and even in China traces of like customs are found.[17] In these cases fate of tree and person are so bound together that withering of or damage to the tree results in or indicates harm to the person. Thus certain Nigerian tribes hold that a tree has the life or breath of a person in it, and that harm to either may mean death to the other.[18]

[14] Taylor, *Te Ika a Maui*, p. 184.

[15] Burton, *Wit and Wisdom from West Africa*, p. 411.

[16] Rivers, *Melanesian Society*, i. 155.

[17] Cases are collected in Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, ii. 28 ff.

[18] Thomas, *Anthropological Report*, pp. 29, 31, *et passim*.

V

PARITY OF BEING

V

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THIS opens the way to the next branch of the subject. If the human soul could reside in objects, why should not these objects themselves possess spirits? The evident conviction of early and primitive races as to the existence, form, and substance of the human soul has, it is believed, been adequately presented in the foregoing. But is the possession of soul limited by these races to humanity? Do primitive peoples regard other beings as also so endowed? The definition of animism already furnished involves an affirmative answer, but we must look a little further into this phase of the subject. There is an "epigram of Christian pantheism" which declares that "God sleeps in the stone, dreams in the plant, awakens in the animal, and is self-conscious in man." [1] This expresses in some

[1] Basil Wilberforce, *Steps in Spiritual Growth*, p. 50.

degree what primitive man thought of things about him, except that he would have demurred at the idea of mere sleep or dream of the sentient in the world of the non-human. He doubtless from the beginning made himself the measure of things. And so, as was briefly shown at the beginning of this discussion,[2] any object in nature might be conceived by primitive or savage as a duality, like himself, the body of which was visible and tangible, and the soul, like his own, invisible except to the soul itself or to the skilled shaman. With the untutored, nothing exists in nature but may give occasion to this conception of possession of soul. Omaha Indians represent this by the statement that all forms mark where Wakonda has stopped and brought them into existence. "Man . . . becomes literally a part of nature, connected with it physically and related to it psychically." So endowments of animals may be transferred to man, and Wakonda helps in answer to prayer by sending the animal which has the endowment proper to the end desired. This explains in part the "animal totem," found in almost exactly parallel form among the Tamaniu of

[2] Pp. 10 ff., above.

the Banks Islands.[3] Another statement of the fact is the following:

"The quality of savage mind which perhaps most profoundly illuminates our subject is its hazy sense of personality, the difficulty it experiences in marking off its 'self' from other selves; in other words, the absence of sharp dualisms. This is revealed in creation myths, in primitive notions of kinship and relationship, in the almost universal savage belief in metamorphosis, in the savage's identification of 'self' with the name, shadow, dream-self, likeness, clothing and other property. . . . And the wide-spread belief in 'possession' by good or evil spirits further confirms the principle."[4]

More advanced peoples may own to a complete animism. Examples are found in the advanced philosophies and religions of India. "Only last summer in a conversation with an orthodox Brahman in Kashmir I discovered that he regarded everything in nature, down to separate stick and stone and blade of

[3] A. C. Fletcher and F. La Flesche, in *Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, p. 600; Rivers, *Melanesian Society*, i. 154.

[4] Todd, *The Primitive Family as an Educational Agency*, pp. 9–10.

grass, as possessed by its own spirit." [5] It is not wonderful that man should endow with life, soul, and power the great objects of nature, the heavenly bodies, for instance. Nor can we wonder that such objects as a volcano with its manifestation of mysterious force, a mountain range which seems to clothe itself in clouds and to launch forth the avalanche, the sea, with its varied moods and mystery, that appals even the modern experienced traveler, the river with its ceaseless flow and its occasional devastations, the forest with its reaches of silence or its monotone under the soughing of the wind, call up convictions of dread personality. These things alone suffice to suggest that primitive man felt himself ever in the presence of mystery. Few objects there were but seemed to possess each its own basis for arousing admiration or fear.

It is necessary here to inquire somewhat more minutely into the drift of the thoughts of primitive man concerning the things he saw or felt or imagined. And in doing this we are to recall that three avenues are open along which to advance in this inquiry. First

[5] Professor Hervey D. Griswold, in *The Biblical World*, Sept. 1912, p. 165.

there is the avenue of cult, where definite acts of devotion or gift (sacrifice) unfailingly indicate belief in the sentient and potent capabilities of the object addressed. It is obvious that even the most naïve of savages pay no attention of this sort to objects which they conceive to be without the qualities of life, sensation, emotion, and power. The second avenue is that of folk-lore and mythology. To some this may appear trivial and unworthy of serious attention. Yet these are "the sedimentary deposits of the traditions of remotely distant epochs." [6] Just as children's games and festivals in May or in harvest season recall and are founded on practices that once obtained in real earnest, so folk-tales encyst, like a fly in the amber or a fossil in the rock, the indications of life in some cases long past. In other instances not a few they represent thought that still lingers, if we but knew where to look for it. Stories of men and women transformed into beasts, either voluntarily or involuntarily, of cats or hares which prove to be the forms witches assume for mischievous ends, seem to us foolish; the tales of were-wolves, told in

[6] Cox, *Introduction to Folk-lore*, pp. 3–4.

earnest even yet in parts of Europe, seem to the educated impossible and merely laughable. Yet we shall see that the modern African believes them, and at times looks askance at his neighbor who has the reputation of being an "elephant-man" or a "leopard-man." The third avenue is that of beliefs still or recently current among savages comparatively or completely unaffected by the higher civilizations. Even in India, which has so long been in contact with the culture of the West, old beliefs linger, often in passive but effective resistance to more enlightened ideas, while in Africa and among the indigenes of the Americas and of Australia and Oceanica native forms of thought continue, sometimes but little adulterated, as where relationship is claimed by a clan or tribe with this or that genus of plant or animal life.

I. INANIMATE OBJECTS IN NATURE POSSESS SOUL

It seems superfluous here to cite cases of the belief which has existed so nearly universally that the sun, the planets, and the stars are living objects possessed of soul.

The stage in which a deity is supposed to inhabit or to rule or to have as his special sphere of control one of these heavenly objects registers, of course, an advanced culture, when pure animism has given way to a higher mode of thought and a truer perception of facts.[7] But that once these objects were regarded as sentient is clear from poetry, myth, and remainder in folk-lore and song. Among Oceanicans the sun is in form like a man, but possessed of fearful energy. He has many legs, and various other members in excess.[8] Worthy of special notice in this connection is the conception of the earth as the great mother, a belief that was historical in Babylonia, Asia Minor particularly, and in Greece, where it influenced in especial manner practice and ritual. Speaking of the Sumerians Langdon says:

"The nourishing life of earth, warmed by the sunshine, refreshed by the rains, furnished

[7] On Zeus as an example of this, see Cook's *Zeus*, p. 3, note 2.

[8] Westervelt, *Legends of Maui*, pp. 50, 52. For a collection of indications of worship of the sun (itself proof of the way in which this luminary was regarded), see the author's article in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, xi. 137–145; for star-worship, *ib.*, xi. 68–69; and for worship of the moon among the Hebrews, *ib.*, vii. 492–494.

the prehistoric Sumerians . . . with their first god. And this deity who fostered all life was conceived of as a mother, unbegotten, genderless, producing animal and vegetable life as a virgin. But primitive peoples do not think in abstract terms, nor do they produce ideas as abstract principles. They conceived the earth goddess under that form of life with which they were most familiar. In the case of this people the grape vine appears to have been the plant which appealed to them as most efficiently manifesting the power of the great mother. Hence they called this goddess 'Mother Vine-Stalk,' or simply 'Goddess Vine-Stalk.'" [9]

In Nigeria the ground is an object which underlies many taboos, and to it sacrifices are offered of many kinds.[10] The feeling among the Ibo-speaking peoples seems much like that, if not the same, which governed in Greece and Asia Minor before the personalizing of the Great Mother.[11] At the other extreme the sky is regarded as father, though in the Egyptian myth, which speaks of the

[9] Langdon, *Tammuz and Ishtar*, p. 43.

[10] Thomas, *Anthropological Report*, i. 11, *et passim*.

[11] Cf., for instance, Harrison, *Prolegomena*, pp. 260–271.

separation of earth and heaven (a myth that is characterized by its diffusion or else is indigenous in many regions), curiously enough in a way adumbrating the theory of the evolutionary origin of the worlds and appearing in Gen. 1, the respective genders of earth and sky are reversed.[12]

But such faith is not confined to celestial objects and the earth. Things terrestrial, tangible or intangible, had each its own spirit and life. Thus, to group a number of these, winds, lightning, mountains, and forests are sentient beings. Thus of some Africans it is said that they hold that: "The wind talks to the forest and the forest to the wind. The tornado is often nothing more than a quarrel between mountain and forest, lightning and wind [which latter is a servant of something else]; and we ourselves [the Africans] may get hit with the bits."[13] Pima Indians think of Wind and Storm-cloud (Rain-man) as supernatural persons who once did menial

[12] For a descriptive picture of this separation, cf. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der Aegypter*, p. 210, reproduced in *Homiletic Review*, Oct., 1912, p. 275. For a crude form of this myth of the separation of heaven and earth, see Westervelt, *Legends of Maui*, pp. 31 ff.

[13] Milligan, *Fetish Folk of West Africa*, p. 215.

service for mortals, while Thunder also possesses personality, owns fire, and detects the thief of fire (the essentials of the story of Prometheus are here);[14] and the notions of the Omahas are quite similar. The Uriankhai of Mongolia deify mountains, rivers, and the wind.[15] The Zulus regard their rainmakers as operating upon clouds as the Greeks thought of Zeus the Cloud-gatherer, and to them cloud and lightning are still sentient beings, alive and full of power, though controlled by the medicine men.[16]

The sea is regarded in the same way. Hartland cites the case of the ancient Celts reported by Ælian, supported in substance by native evidence from Celtic tradition, who used to meet the overflowing sea with drawn swords and menacing spears, employing the same methods as those used towards human enemies.[17] Mr. Hartland refers also to the same notion as exhibited by the Malays and reported by Skeat. It would be easy to adduce testimony to this same effect from Africa, where the

[14] Fewkes, *28th Annual Report of Bureau of Am. Ethnology*, pp. 43, 47; Fletcher and La Flesche, *22d Report, passim.*

[15] Carruthers, *Unknown Mongolia*, i. 243.

[16] Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, i. 109.

[17] Hartland, *Ritual and Belief*, pp. 161 ff.

natives of the West shore offer sacrifice to the sea in order to induce it to grant an easy landing. In folk-lore this idea is transformed later in culture-history into the kelpies and what-not that inhabit the waters; but students of folk tales have no doubt that in the original form the sea was regarded as possessing full personality with all that is involved.

It seems superfluous almost to cite cases of rivers which have personality, since classic stories abound which bear out the claim. Yet it is useful to show that such ideas are not confined to the literature of Greece.[18] For instance, a traveler who was being conveyed by canoe and paddle up a river was persuaded by the Africans to turn back because a cloud appeared over the stream, and they supposed that it was caused by the river in displeasure at the profanation of its waters by a stranger. In other cases the river is simply possessed by a spirit, to which offerings should be made in

[18] For citations of rivers regarded as divinities by Greeks the reader may consult Halliday, *Greek Divination*, pp. 116–117. He will find there that springs also come under the same category. Thus the spring at Kolophon rendered inspired the priest who drank it (Tacitus, *Annals*, ii. 54; Pliny, ii. 103, 232). One recalls inevitably the many sacred springs throughout the world, the sanctity being but the attenuated form in which the old belief has come down to us.

order that no calamity may be suffered in the crossing.[19] The survival in poetry of the thought of a river as a person may be illustrated from the *Ramayana*, where a river becomes the wife of a king (xv. 20: 13), or falls in love and bears a son (xiii. 2: 18). The Ganges is a daughter and a goddess, becomes a spouse and bears a son. In the days of wife-capture, primitives would see in a torrent into which a maiden had fallen a male capturing his wife; or, in case of a man falling in, they might think of a fierce female seizing a husband. It will be recalled that the Egyptians thought of the Nile as a short ugly male with huge woman's breasts, symbolizing the fertility which the river brought to the land. In New Guinea the rivers are besought as persons to make gifts of fish to the Mafulu.[20] In Mongolia they are deified.[20a]

The views of fire as a person, having attributes that correspond, might be easily supported by reference to the Vedic and Brahmanic teaching respecting Agni, whose name reappears in the Latin as *ignis*, fire.

[19] Roscoe, *Baganda*, pp. 318–319.
[20] Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, p. 231.
[20a] Carruthers, *Unknown Mongolia*, i. 243.

The Kai of German New Guinea assert deliberately that fire has soul.[21] One might with profit investigate the background of the Zoroastrian notion of the extreme sanctity of fire, and the Aryo-Indian conceptions already noted would be found lurking therein. Similarly Malabars hold that a flame has life and spirit, and fear the ghost of a flame that has suddenly been quenched.[22]

The evidence of belief in the life and power, even of the divinity, of rocks and stones is too abundant to be cited at any length. In the Semitic sphere William Robertson Smith has offered irrefutable evidence of worship of such objects — worship, it will be seen at once, being evidence of belief in possession of attributes equivalent to soul and spirit by the object of devotion.[23] It is among the curiosities of history that the stones of Carnac in France and of Rollright in England are said to leave their positions and to go down to the sea, or to a spring to drink.[24] Africans report that a large stone near a village patrols

[21] Neuhass, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. 143–144.

[22] *Folk-lore*, v. 297 ff.

[23] *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, and *Religion of the Semites*.

[24] *Folk-lore*, v. 297 ff.

the outskirts of that village during danger.[25] A great rock in the African region inhabited by the Baganda is deemed sacred and is an object of worship and propitiation, and the same is true of a meteorite.[26] The stone of Nimm, an Etoi goddess, is now an altar, and this is doubtless but a development from the conception of it as endowed with life, as might be abundantly illustrated from other sources.[27] In Mongolia stones are among the objects of worship.[28] In Melanesia stones and rocks of many sorts receive offerings, and are regarded either as the homes of spirits or as being the possessors of these — the two are not so far apart; also in the Solomon Islands spirit is associated with stone. In the New Hebrides large rocks are especially sacred. Banks Islanders regard certain long stones as so much alive that they can draw out a man's soul if his shadow fall on them. In Florida Island any peculiarly shaped stone may have life and soul attributed to it.[29]

[25] D'Alviella, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 54.

[26] Roscoe, *The Baganda*, pp. 271–272, 290.

[27] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 171–172.

[28] Carruthers, *Unknown Mongolia*, i. 56 ff.

[29] Codrington, *Melanesians*, pp. 119, 140, 143, 169, *et passim*; Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, p. 178.

In many cases of this sort the attitude toward them seems to imply in them a kind of sanctity, which is however but a more developed way of thinking and is evidential of an earlier and cruder mode of thought. A survival of this character is in evidence near Laguna, New Mexico, where seven jagged rocks are the prisons of seven spirits.[30] The stone of the Omaha sweat lodge was regarded anthropopathically.[31] The case of the Baganda meteorite cited above is but one of many instances of the kind in which veneration has been paid. The two stones of the Kaaba at once occur to the mind.[32] Acts 19:35 furnishes a notable instance. One may recall the very numerous cases from ancient Greece — the sacred stone at Delphi, that at Hyettos, the thirty worshipped by the Pharæans, the many Hermæ along the Greek roads referred to so often by the classical writers.[33] These were worshipped and anointed with oil — compare the treatment accorded Jacob's pillar (above, p. 5).

[30] Quoted by Wallis in *JRP*, July 1912, from *Southern Workman*, Nov. 1910.

[31] Fletcher and La Flesche, *27th Report*, etc., pp. 575–578.

[32] *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, vi. 289.

[33] Theophrastus, *Characteres ethici*, xvi.; Pausanias, ed. Frazer, VIII. xxxiv. 3; X. xxiv. 6, etc.

At Aneiteum in Melanesia stones thought to resemble objects of desire or striving received worship from various classes of people. Thus one that was fish-shaped was venerated by fishermen.[34]

To catalogue here the various objects in nature which have had life attributed to them would require much space. Mention will be made of only the following in addition to those already adduced. The rainbow is a thing of life in Australia, inhabiting deep water-holes in the mountains; it is seen only when it is passing from one of these to another. Approximately the same notion obtains in Africa.[35] Among the Baganda of Africa, rain-water is a totem (i.e., it is either an ancestor or an ally).[36] By Arabs the resin or gum from which the frankincense of commerce is derived is regarded as the blood of a tree, the soul of which is a divinity, and the gathering of the gum is attended by special ceremonies.[37] The Tshemsheans of Alaska find their devotional spirit awakened, as in the presence of a

[34] Turner, *Samoa*, p. 327.

[35] Mathew, *Eagle-hawk and Crow*, p. 146; *Missions Catholiques*, no. 239, p. 592.

[36] Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 140.

[37] Zehnpfund, in *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, iv. 372.

supernatural being, by precipices, tidal waves, or indeed almost any object or phenomenon that is strange to them.[38]

2. SOUL IN THINGS ARTIFICIAL

A rather noted controversy over theories of language, and incidentally of myth and religion, once took place between Professors Max Müller and Whitney, in which, a little after the event, the late Andrew Lang took a hand. The Oxford scholar saw in myth "a disease of language," and Mr. Lang replied that what the data showed was a disease of thought. By this Mr. Lang intended to convey the idea that man was astray either in his observations or in the deductions he made from them. How far astray from the truth man often was we have already seen. But notions even more strange are yet to be cited. One of the earliest literary testimonies to the class of ideas to be noted in this section is found in one of the minor prophets, who declares:

"They (men) sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drags; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat

[38] Arctander, *Apostle of Alaska*, pp. 100 ff.

plenteous.[39]" Here we have a fact stated, as well as the reason for the fact which can be duplicated from many different quarters even in our own day. Objects which were the product of man's own handicraft, the genesis of which and whole production and mode of use he knew, received his homage. Hunting implements and those used in agriculture are by man endowed with life and power before which he bows in reverence. In India there is a festival lasting three days, observed in October by Hindoos of all castes, including the Brahmins, which has to do with the worship of all sorts of tools and implements. In many cases it is doubtless but the survival of a custom; in very many others, however, the original element of ascription of life or divinity still inheres.[40] It is not so very difficult to see the reason for the primitive mind's being affected in this way. Why should the mere scratching of the earth with a rude hoe and the deposition of a seed produce so bountiful and, to it, strange results? What did early man know of the chemistry of nature? Was it not the spirit in the hoe

[39] Habakkuk 1: 16.

[40] Cf. Thurston, *Omens and Superstitions*, pp. 174–175.

that made the gift of the harvest? If we were to study fetishism, we should discover that man believes that he can bring together "odds and ends" in a bundle or bag, and that a spirit will take up its abode there. Why should not with easy plausibility the hoe or net or drag equally be or become animate? It is perhaps not at all wonderful that in India particularly, perhaps elsewhere, the fire-drill was an object of devotion and conceived to be divine. When we recall the fact, now so familiar to us, but remaining to the Hindoos for millenniums one of the arcana of nature, viz., that from a place where apparently there was no fire, fire may be evoked, literally called into being, we can begin to appreciate in some small degree man's awe before such phenomena. We can find the same awe existing in Fiji, where, besides stones, houses, and canoes, tools of various sorts are credited with souls and believed to be immortal.[41] In the same region so isolated and insignificant a thing as a whale's tooth is credited with life and immortality; so the Fijian ghost in the spirit land on occasion throws at a pandanus tree the

[41] Williams, *Fiji*, i. 241.

ghost of the whale's tooth that was buried with his body.[42]

Not less curious than the foregoing is the fact that food and the like have been and still are regarded as animate and possessed of spirit. The ancient Egyptians provided for the *ka*, soul or double of the deceased, articles of food, drink, or clothing, so that it need not suffer hunger, thirst, or cold. But the ka, being ethereal, did not use the things themselves, but only the parts of them that stood in the same relation to the things as the ka did to the deceased, i.e., their souls or doubles. So that there a conception wondrously like that of spirit or soul is attributed to articles of food, drink, and clothing. In the earlier stages of Egyptian civilization, the things devoted to the deceased were purposely mutilated; and it requires no stretch of the imagination, had we no contemporaneous testimony to the fact, to see in this mutilation of the offerings the same process as we are familiar with in another connection, viz., the killing of the offerings.[43] Just as slaves and wives were sent through the gates of death

[42] Williams, *Fiji*, i. 243 ff.

[43] *Ancient Egypt*, ii (1914), 123.

to serve their dead lord, so were implements, weapons, ornaments and food. In Nigeria around funeral shrines are fragments of household belongings, which have been broken so that their astral forms may be set free to be carried by the owner's shade to its spirit home.[44] In perfect agreement with this trend of thought, the Dyaks of Borneo bury with the body various utensils, and hold that these have spirits which the deceased takes along with him to his new home and puts to good use.[45] In Central Africa baskets, hoe-handles, pots that have been perforated, broken cups and the like are placed at graves, having been killed by breaking that their spirits may go to the spirit land there to do service.[46] In like fashion the Bakongos endow bottles, cloths, umbrellas and similar articles with spirit.[47] Talbot learned in Africa that to a cloth can be imparted personal qualities, so that it breaks out into speech.[48] Even ornaments may have soul, according to the Melane-

[44] Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection*, ii. 119–120; Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 6 ff.

[45] Gomes, *Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, pp. 138, 142.

[46] Werner, *Native Races*, pp. 155, 159.

[47] Weeks, *Primitive Bakongo*, pp. 269, 272.

[48] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 226.

sians of New Guinea, and their souls, evaporated by fire, are offered to disease demons which have operated by extracting a human soul from its abode.[49] The Kai of German New Guinea offer food and viands to the ghosts of their dead, which considerately eat only the soul thereof and leave the substance to those who offer it.[50] It would seem from certain passages in the Old Testament that the conception once existed that even a part of the body might have individual life and power. Witness the expression, "El (God) of my hand" (Gen. 31:29; Deut. 28:32; Micah 2:1; Prov. 3:27; Neh. 5:5).[51] Even so abstract a conception as the year receives homage as a personality among the Ibo-speaking peoples, who, by the way, place rivers among the great powers which they name Alose.[52]

[49] Seligmann, *Melanesians*, pp. 189 ff.
[50] Neuhass, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. 145 ff., 489 ff., 513 ff.
[51] B. D. Eerdmans, in *Expositor*, Nov. 1913, p. 386.
[52] Thomas, *Anthropological Report*, pp. 27 ff.

3. SOUL OR SPIRIT IN THE VEGETABLE WORLD

If things so obviously inanimate as those we have just noticed could be regarded as possessing the attributes of life and soul, it is no wonder that the vegetable world was thought to exhibit the same qualities. The plant has the power of producing pregnancy in the human species, since leaf and flower from certain specified kinds of plants, falling on a woman, get her with child.[53] In Melanesia the Cycas and the Casuarina are sacred, and in folk-lore the Cycas becomes a maiden. Children also are believed to have sprung from trees, fruits, and other vegetable growths.[54] In Australia the cones of the Casuarina are supposed to have eidola which, when released by burning, attack the eyes of bystanders and cause blindness — in all probability the stinging character of the smoke is thus explained.[55] Trees have souls, feel pain, and even hold conversation, and this is not con-

[53] Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 48.

[54] Codrington, *Melanesians*, p. 187; cf. Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 133–135.

[55] Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-east Australia*, pp. 363, 366, 376–377, 453.

fined to the larger growths, being extended to plants or shrubs, and some skilled humans have had the knowledge of plant language.[56] The fertilization of trees may be regarded as the result of desire and voluntative action. Malays believe implicitly in the souls of trees and consider it appropriate to make offerings to them.[57] The tree as oracle in Ancient Greece and elsewhere is a well known fact — cf. the sacred oak at Dodona, whose character is standing evidence of belief in its divinity, and this in ancient times included the idea of intelligent life and soul. One might produce abundance of evidence of ascription of these possessions to plants from the phenomena of totemism, the idea here being either descent from or alliance with some particular species of plant, treatment of which was always respectful and like that accorded to members of the human tribe or clan. Thus, to cite but a single instance out of the many available, such plants as the bean, mushroom, and yam

[56] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 30–36, 177–178, 181, 287, 299–300; D'Alviella, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 53 ff. In the tale of Anpu and Bata (Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, 2d series, pp. 48 ff.) the tree has power of speech.

[57] Skeat, *Malay Magic*, pp. 194; *Homiletic Review*, July, 1912, pp. 14–15; Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, ii. 441.

occur as totems among the Baganda.[58] Among the Ibo-speaking peoples trees known as Ojuku and Ngu belong to the powers known as Alose, and so akin to man are certain trees that in the process of reincarnation their souls may animate human bodies.[59] The worship of the tree has received attention so frequent and elaborate as here not to call for extended treatment. From the British Isles across Europe and Asia evidence of this cult is abundant, and has been increased in the excavations which have brought to light the ancient Mycenæan and Mediterranean civilizations. How widespread this worship has been in India may be seen from the sculpture still in existence, some of which has been illustrated and studied by Fergusson.[60]

Among the Mafulu of New Guinea the yam is regarded as having personality, and possessing a sweetheart plant.[61] One of the most remarkable testimonies to the feeling of primitive man in reference to the forest is the following from Lange; speaking of an Indian alone in the bush:

[58] J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, pp. 138–140.
[59] N. W. Thomas, *Anthropological Report*, i. 27, 28, 31, *et passim*.
[60] *Tree and Serpent Worship;* cf. *Homiletic Review*, July, 1912.
[61] Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, pp. 233 ff.

"It appears to the Indian that he is beside himself; he feels strange exterior influences of an almost overwhelming character, foreign to men who are only used to a civilized life and whose path is far away from the wilderness. It appears to him now that an invisible and almost irresistible force is trying to attract him, and to lead him deeper and deeper into the forest, perhaps there to perish. He feels the sense of fear; he argues with himself: 'The forest wants to destroy me, to kill me, to absorb me.' After he returns to his hut, he says: 'I was hunting, the forest wanted to kill me, and got me almost into its power, but I escaped and I have returned safely.'" [62]

4. SOUL OR SPIRIT IN ANIMALS

If the principle of "parity of being" involves the conception of life and soul in inanimate objects and in the plant world, *a fortiori* we should expect that animals would be endowed, in the mind of primitives, with the same qualities. Here again no exhaustive examination and collection of cases can be presented,

[62] Lange, *The Lower Amazon*, p. 424.

so extensive is the evidence. What will be offered will show simply the range of the idea and the completeness with which it is carried out.

"In all African fables the various animals are but thinly disguised human beings." [63] Even the lower forms of animal life, such as the starfish, indeed totally mythical examples of this species, have been regarded as possessed of or as being spirit. Thus in the Murray River region of Australia a huge starfish is supposed to be a spirit and to inhabit a deep water hole.[64] Animals like lions, leopards, crocodiles, sheep, reptiles, and others have ghosts that are dangerous after death and must be placated or guarded against.[65] Ainus treat as a god a captive bear, and when it is killed for food, some of its own flesh is offered to it as a sacrifice.[66] Many other peoples in different quarters of the world — American Indians, Malays, and so on — treat with pretended or real honor the game animal they slay, or attempt to cajole it or deceive it,

[63] Milligan, *Fetish Folk of West Africa*, p. 215.
[64] Taplin, *Narrinyeri*, p. 138.
[65] Roscoe, *The Baganda*, pp. 288–289.
[66] Batchelor, *Ainus and their Folk-lore*, pp. 486–496.

just as they would attempt to cajole or deceive one of their own species if success seemed likely, in order that its spirit or its blood kin may not avenge its slaughter. Malays will cry out to a tiger which they have trapped that "Mohammed set the trap," so as to send its spirit on a false scent when it starts out for revenge.[67] Among the Dyaks the crocodile when caught "is addressed in eulogistic language and beguiled, so the people say, into offering no resistance. He is called a rajah among animals, and is told that he has come on a friendly visit and must behave accordingly. . . . Though the animal is spoken to in such flattering terms before he is secured, the moment . . . he is powerless for evil, they deride him for his stupidity."[68] Their treatment of bears and tigers is quite similar. Few facts could more emphatically demonstrate the complete parity of animals with man, as conceived by various races, than the remarkable one that animals have been credited with organization into kinships, families, societies, and governments, and

[67] Skeat, *Malay Magic*, p. 167; cf. Charlevoix, *Journal d'un voyage dans l'Amérique septentrionale*, v. 173.

[68] Gomes, *Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, pp. 59–60.

that they are held to perform even worship.[69] The extreme example of what Andrew Lang called "disease of thought" in this direction has already been noted, in the cases where man regards himself indifferently as a cassowary or some other totem gens, or on the other hand considers the animal species as the same as himself.[70] This curious operation of the mind may be further illustrated by two other examples. The islanders of Mabuiag say of the cassowary that "he all same as relation, he belong same family," and Alaskans took the first Russians whom they saw for cuttle fish because of the buttons on their clothes.[71] It is, after this, no subject for wonder if a Zuni Indian see in a turtle or rabbit or hedgehog the embodiment of one of his ancestors, or that a totem clan can trace origins back to planet or sun, to bird, beast, or reptile.[72] The complete parity of different states of existence is here in evidence; and implicit

[69] Illustrations of monkeys performing the acts of worship are abundantly found in the sculptures of India; cf. worship of the sacred tree in Fergusson's *Tree and Serpent Worship*, and *Homiletic Review*, July, 1912.

[70] See p. 8.

[71] Frazer, *Golden Bough*[2], ii. 388 ff.

[72] F. Cushing, in *Century Magazine*, May, 1883; and *Zuni Tales*, *passim*.

always, explicit most of the time, is the idea of possession of spirit or soul, though the conception is necessarily vague.

Further testimony is furnished by the peoples who hold that animals, birds, and the like understand human speech, have languages of their own, talk, perform the operations of reason, engage in trade, are subject to passions, yield to coaxing, blandishment or deception, play tricks on each other and on humans, scheme for each other's hurt or death, and perform many humanlike actions.[73] The Melanesians attribute to the snake the power of articulate speech; and the dog is equally well endowed, if we may listen to the Blacks of Australia.[74] Africans of the Niger region are not alone in giving speech and reason to the parrot, and they know that a hawk takes a tree as a wife.[75] These cases are curiously duplicated among the Pima Indians, where the dog used to have the power to speak, and

[73] Roscoe, *The Baganda*, pp. 467–483; cf. the collection of cases in Frazer, *Taboo*, ii. 169–273, 398–404, of incidents showing treatment of animals as though possessed of the sentimentalities, etc., of human beings; note the speech of cattle, etc., in the "Tale of Anpu and Bata," Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii. 48 ff.

[74] Codrington, *Melanesians*, p. 151; Fison and Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, p. 218.

[75] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 252, 253, 299–300.

an eagle took the form of an old woman and seized and carried off a girl as a wife. A legendary personage also becomes a snake, and another named Tonto drinks "medicine" and becomes an eagle.[76] The folk-lore of India is rich in this sort of tale. Animals, led by the crafty jackal (which takes the place of the fox in the Occident), not only talk and lay deep plots, but act in all ways like humans. And the same is true of the feathered tribes. It is of course not strange that the parrot should talk, but other birds are as well endowed, so the report goes, and, besides, know how to cure diseases. Wild elephants are worshipped by the Kadirs of India. The dogs, pigs, and other domestic animals of the dead at Tubetube, British New Guiana, have spirits which find their owners in the spirit land.[77]

A reader who knew nothing of the interpretation of the serpent in Gen. 3 which has been current in Jewish and Christian circles

[76] Fewkes, *28th Report*, etc., pp. 44, 45, 48, 52.

[77] Cf. Day, *Folk-Tales of Bengal*, p. 134; Steel and Temple, *Wide-awake Stories*, pp. 66–67; Thurston, *Omens and Superstitions*, p. 83; Parker, *Village Folk Tales of Ceylon*, pp. 113 ff. 122 ff., 209 ff., 213 ff., *et passim;* Brown, *Melanesians and Polynesians*, pp. 443 ff.; Williamson, *South Sea Savages*, p. 65.

would see in that deceiver an animal cast in the form of primitive belief, endowed with cunning and with power of speech — an animal, and nothing more. The reading which makes of it a form assumed by the devil for purposes of guile belongs to a much later age than the story itself. In many lands one may find stories parallel to this one regarded as an animistic "left-over." The early Egyptians could tell of a serpent tribe that had reason, speech, organized society, government, and manners that some modern nations might copy to their own credit and the comfort of their neighbours. They had stories that dealt with walking and winged serpents, such as Eve's beast apparently was before the curse. And in our own day the Ekoi of West Africa know of reptiles that once had hands and feet and led a family life.[78] In Melanesia the snake is (or is associated with) spirit.[79] On the worship of the serpent much has been collected, and more is continually coming to light.[80] The complete parity of this animal

[78] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, i. 81 ff.; Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 374–377.

[79] Codrington, *Melanesians*, p. 189.

[80] Cf. the article "Serpent" etc. in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, x. 363–370; Schlegel, *Schlüssel zur Ewe-Sprache*,

with man in these respects is illustrated farther by the fact that the snake may wed with mortals.[81]

p. 14; Milligan, *Fetish Folk of West Africa*, pp. 233–234; and the two notable volumes of Miss Harrison, *Prolegomena*, and *Themis*, where the dominance of the serpent idea and its continuance are none the less markedly exhibited in that this particular phase is not at all the main thesis of her works, and is therefore incidental and the more striking.

[81] Thurston, *Omens and Superstitions*, p. 91

VI

BELIEF IN "FREE SPIRITS"

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IT is not to be supposed that life, soul, spirit, possessing emotional, volitional, and factual potency, was limited in savage man's conception to the tangible and visible. If the soul of man was itself invisible, and if soul were a possession of plants, animals, and other natural objects, yet perceived only by its operations, why should there not be other souls "loose in the universe," unseen and unfelt except as they revealed themselves by their activities or manifestations to the world of sense? So man seems to have reasoned, and this belief abides today in the minds of the mass of mankind, even in Christendom. Spirits, unfixed so to speak, having form and substance, indeed, but not body, roamed free and unfettered in air, on land, in the waters. They lurked in nook and cranny, behind bush and tree and rock; they came in storm and wind; they inhabited the woods, floated in the atmosphere, swam in the sea and in lake

and stream, parched in the desert, hid in cave or roamed on mountain top. Wherever mystery is possible, there man imagines non-human spirits to exist. A suggestion of the enormity of the numbers of spirits whose existence is conceived is given by the following from the strongly animistic Shinto faith of Japan in comparatively modern times.

"Reverently adoring the great god of the two palaces of Ise (the sun-goddess) in the first place, the 800 myriads of celestial kami, the 800 myriads of ancestral kami, all the 1,500 myriads to whom are consecrated the great and small temples in all provinces, all islands and all places in the great land of eight islands, the 1,500 myriads of kami whom they cause to serve them. . . . I pray with awe that they will deign to correct the unwitting faults which, heard and seen by them, I have committed, and, blessing and favouring me according to the powers which they severally wield, cause me to follow the divine example, and to perform good works in the way." [1]

Examples at almost any length might be

[1] Quoted by Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, p. 93, from a morning prayer by Hirata, a Japanese (1776–1843).

cited from modern works of contemporaries. Only a few instances will be given here simply to illustrate the principle. Central Australians believe in the existence of Wullunqua, a dread spirit which inhabits a deep water hole.[2] And other tribes of that continent have similar traditions, such as the Narrinyeri, who know of a like spirit, the Mulgewauke.[3] By the inhabitants of New Guinea spirits, non-human, are supposed to inhabit any place with unusual physical characteristics — waterfall, pool, queer-shaped rock, or the like.[4] Of the Guiana native Im Thurn says:

"His whole world swarms with beings. He is surrounded by a host of them, possibly harmful. It is therefore not wonderful that the Indian fears to be without his fellow, fears even to move beyond the light of his camp-fire, and when obliged to do so, carries a fire-brand with him, that he may have a chance of seeing the beings among whom he moves." [5]

Truly the angelology and demonology of advanced faiths have a long ancestry.

[2] Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, etc., *passim*.

[3] Taplin, *Narrinyeri*, pp. 48, 91.

[4] Williamson, *Ways of South Sea Savage*, p. 283.

[5] *Among the Indians of Guiana*.

As already suggested, the groundwork for such a faith was already laid in the observations and deductions regarding man's soul. If in sleep his spirit could go forth unseen by companions who were near, in order that it might perform the deeds of the dream state so real to the savage; if it were true that a faint were caused by the temporary desertion of its home by the soul; if at death it could depart without detection by those intent in their watch over the ailing, and reveal its invisibility by going forth unseen to a disembodied existence, why should there not be numerous other spirits — either temporarily or permanently and by nature bodiless — abroad in the universe? This would be normal reasoning, and was actual. The belief is so well known, evidences of it are so easily accessible, that direct demonstration here is hardly obligatory. As a matter of fact, in parts of our discussion yet to come, the proof will appear incidentally, so that to give it here would be but to duplicate what is both implicit and explicit in testimony on another but related line of investigation.

In a recent paragraph the words "angelology" and "demonology" were employed,

and in their use there is implicit a fundamental philosophy which has swayed the conceptions, awakened the hopes and aroused the fears, helped to form the cults, and controlled the actions of men in all ages and climes for which direct testimony is adducible. The dualism of substance, body and spirit, inherent in the notions of animism is paralleled by a coincident dualism of character. There were good spirits and bad, white spirits and black. And this character was determined by their supposed favor or disfavor toward man. There were also good spirits which by reason of their emotional natures were capable of showing inimical traits, while the bad might be pacified, rendered innocuous or even friendly, by the appropriate treatment.

This is, of course, but the reflection of men's interpretation of their own nature and experiences, the result of their reasoning about that nature and those experiences. Sometimes enterprises went awry without any cause to them discoverable; again, good fortune attended their ventures, and this in spite of what seemed to them legitimate fears and untoward beginnings. But on the hypothesis of hosts of invisible beings all about

them, good or ill fortune was fully accounted for by the direction or interference of these spirits in man's favor or against him. To any event or happening otherwise unaccountable a cause was assigned in the action of spirits which worked when, where, and how they pleased. And as the human being was amenable to gift or praise or request, so would the spirits yield to similar courses of treatment. As he was vexed or angered by opposition to his will or by actual harm, so, he reasoned, the spirits could be enraged by human doings contrary to their desires. Once more, just as he might, when angered, be placated by use of the proper means, so would the spirits be soothed and rendered benign were they properly approached. As he succumbed or gave way before force greater than his own or was overcome by craft and cunning, the spirits too must yield if *force majeure* could be brought to bear on them or if they could be outwitted.

VII

"FREE SPIRITS"—THEIR CONSTITUTION AND ACTIVITIES

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THE existence and great numbers of spirits which are, so to speak, "free" in the universe have just been shown and discussed.[1] We have noted, too, how readily enters here all that we are accustomed to call miraculous. Only we have constantly to remember that what we call by that name is to primitive people in full accordance with nature as they understand it. The very conception of miracle implies arrival at the thought of a certain uniformity of nature, invariability of cause and effect outside of which the unexpected may happen — and does. It now remains to consider the constitution and activities of the "free" spirits referred to above. A poetical description, having its origin in Babylonia, may here be quoted and serve as a starting point.

[1] Above, pp. 97 ff.

Great storms sent from heaven, are they,
The owl that hoots in the city, are they,
Of Anu's creation,[2] *children born of earth, are they,*
The highest walls, the broadest walls, like a flood, they pass,
From house to house they break through,
No door can shut them out,
No bolt can turn them back,
Through the door like a snake, they glide,
Through the hinge like a wind, they blow.[2a]

Indeed their substance is even more subtle than this account indicates. They can invade a body already possessed by its own spirit and dominate that body for good or evil, or even drive out the native spirit and autocratically rule the captured body. The capture may be temporary or permanent. The words "demoniac" in English, ἔνθεος and νυμφόληπτος[3] in Greek, express the two facts of "possession" for evil or for good. Simi-

[2] Assyr. lit. "outpouring," i.e., of *semen*.

[2a] From cuneiform tablet V, lines 18–35, in the *Utukki Limnuti* series (*Cuneiform Texts* XVI. plate 2); translation kindly furnished by the Rev. Professor Robert W. Rogers, D.D., LL.D., of Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, N. J.

[3] Plato, *Phædrus*, 238, 241.

larly the word "ecstasy" (Greek ἔκστασις)[4] sets forth the belief in the temporary departure from the body of its own spirit, sometimes for communion apart from the body with other spirits; and another Greek word, ἐνθυσιασμός, denotes the entrance into the human organism of a superhuman spirit and the consequent elevation of feeling and surge of emotion. Though the examples thus far cited register the conceptions of peoples advanced in culture, like Greeks, Romans, and Babylonians, they are not the possession exclusively of such; indeed they are survivals from a cruder age. Primitive peoples low in the scale of culture entertain them. Such folk think of the spirits as pervasive and subtle, to whom no doors are closed; as entering with equal facility portals barred with the grosser materials — wood, iron, or stone — or with the living flesh.[5]

While thus in a manner insubstantial and ethereal in constitution, like discarnated human spirits, they have needs, wants, and preferences to which the material may minister. If the gods in the Babylonian epic of the

[4] *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, iv. 71–72.

[5] Murray, *Ancient Egyptian Legends*, pp. 11 ff.

deluge could smell the savor of the post-diluvian offering and "hover like flies over the sacrifice," [6] not less susceptible to appeals offered by material substance are the spirits now under consideration. They have the enjoyments and repulsions of the senses — smell, taste, even grosser physical passions,[7] and so are propitiable or susceptible of anger. While free to roam, they have chosen homes and haunts all their own,[8] though they may become localized in objects of nature, as in India,[9] where so often a stone is the seat of deity, and among the Fang and Mpongwe, so that it seems as if nature is lawless and hostile.[10]

As for disposition, since primitive man measures all things by himself, only intensifying the idea of power — through the use of his imagination, where the element of mystery enters — it would be expected that spirits would be good, evil, or neutral except when

[6] Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels*, p. 98.

[7] Frazer, *Scapegoat*, pp. 112–113; Gen. 6: 1–4; Tobit 8: 1–3; Skeat, *Malay Magic*, p. 213; Gomes, *Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, pp. 194–204; Thomas, *Anthropological Report*, p. 127.

[8] Keller, *Madagascar*, p. 98.

[9] *Methodist Recorder* (London), July 10, 1913.

[10] Milligan, *Fetish Folk*, p. 279.

conciliated or offended;[11] that good spirits could be aroused to wrath by neglect or affront, while evil spirits could be appeased, mollified, or at least rendered harmless by right measures. Some of these spirits are portrayed as jealous and envious, particularly hostile to strangers, and disliking to hear praise of those mortals or their progeny who inhabit the land where these spirits live.[12] New Guineans, however proud of wife, children, or possessions, never praise them but always speak in deprecatory terms. They also dislike to go into the region of another tribe, even for medical treatment, lest the spirits there resident be offended and work them harm.[13] It will be seen at once how these beliefs affect habits of travel and social intercourse.

The varied names of different kinds of spirits are probably a legacy from very early times. We may gather something from our own folk-lore, which mentions fairies and pixies, gnomes, trolls, fauns, satyrs, and dwarfs, elves, vampires, and goblins, sirens, mermaids,

[11] Cox, *Folk-lore*, chap. III.
[12] Parker, *Village Folk Tales of Ceylon*, i. 16, *et passim*.
[13] Newton, *In Far New Guinea*, pp. 86, 120.

and kelpies, nymphs, dryads, and naiads, and all their ilk, whose existence and habits are better known to nurses and nursery children than to the unimaginative scientist. While these creatures are not indeed the free spirits of whom we are speaking, they illustrate the belief in such spirits. For these familiars of childhood are no modern creation, they are survivals of pre-Christian faith, and like the free spirits have all the variety that wild imagination could conjure.[14]

It must not be forgotten, moreover, that the same fate may overtake them as could threaten gods themselves in ancient Egypt — they were not above the hap of death. In Ceylon the Yaka (a sort of evil spirit) is mortal.[15] It may be that out of this thought grew some of the notions respecting the mentality of spirits. We have seen that they are placable and conciliable; they are also compellable and beguilable — by bluff, magic, or threat or use of means productive of results pleasant or repugnant to them.[16]

[14] Thomas, *Anthropological Report*, p. 27.

[15] Parker, *Village Folk Tales*, pp. 143, 265, 274.

[16] Tobit, 8: 1–3; D'Alviella, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 87 ff.; Batchelor, *Ainu*, pp. 42–43; Furness, *Head-hunters*, pp. 16–17; Weeks, *Congo Cannibals*, pp. 267 ff.; Kloss, *In the Andamans*, pp. 230 ff.

It will at once appear how fruitful this idea is in connection with shamanism. Sometimes the only control of spirits and salvation of the people is through shamans.[17] The Wollunqua of Central Australia, a snake spirit, can be either pacified or coerced by magical ceremonies into doing no harm to celebrants of certain rites.[18] The Narrinyeri often have a mock fight in pretense of avenging a death accredited to sorcery.[19] Some Australians are particularly assured that these spirits may be outwitted.[20] The Ceylonese are convinced that a Yaka (the man-eating demon referred to above) may be bluffed into good behavior.[21] The Ainu of Japan also regard spirits as beguilable.[22]

If spirits are compellable, submissive to control by mortals such as medicine men and the like, the way is open for a whole series of attacks in which not only the wills of the spirits but those of mortals, friends, and

[17] Carruthers, *Unknown Mongolia*, i. 150 ff.

[18] Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes*, p. 238.

[19] Taplin, *Narrinyeri*, p. 21.

[20] Curr, *Australian Race*, i. 87; Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 463, 473, 481.

[21] Parker, *Village Folk Tales*, p. 149.

[22] Batchelor, *Ainu*, pp. 42–43.

enemies combine to the resultant weal or woe of human beings. Wizardry and sorcery, with their awful fears and dread results, enter by this as by other doors. And this is by no means always sheer imposture, as the following shows.

"The sorcerer believes in his own power, and the people believe in it too. Certainly the New Guinea philosophy of life is that nothing happens to man without some cause; no man dies a natural death, all suffering and sickness is due to evil spirits which people this world, and as, like many of his white brethren, he is quite prepared to take the good things of life unquestioning, and only to look for causes when evil comes, there is no place in his philosophy for good spirits; the good is but the normal state undisturbed by the machinations of evil spirits, and the evil spirits are usually set to work by some human agent. Though it seems that while the sorcerer may use charms, working through the hair that has been mislaid when the head was shaven, or through the footprints, he is powerful enough to work at times more directly. He is probably a man of stronger character than his fellows — like other trades, it runs in

certain families — and the very fact that he believes in his power, and others believe in it, tends to make him independent and strong in character. He thrives on his reputation, and levies blackmail on all and sundry till some evil day when patience has been exhausted, and an opportunity offers to put him out of the way. Ordinarily he is safe, for no one will touch him or interfere with him unless he can be taken by surprise, and there are always sufferers ready to take the first chance of doing that. How they used to terrorize the neighborhood and take toll! One old ruffian, whose reputation had spread far and wide, could go to villages far from home, and walk off with anything he fancied, the people sitting mum not daring to say a word, or hiding and skulking away as he passed through the village. One of the strongest characters in a village miles away from where this villain lived said, 'Give me a guaranty that I shall not be called to account, and a gun so that I can shoot him when he is not looking, and I will get rid of him, but I dare not touch him if his eyes are on me.'"[23]

But apart from action by these beings

[23] Newton, *In Far New Guinea*, p. 78.

which is determined by human will, desire, vengeance, and other passions, man is an object of interest to the spirits themselves, and they show activity in one way or another, for good or for ill effect upon his fortunes and his person. It is, however, for ill that their principal activity is directed, as estimated by primitives. They work mainly against man and his welfare. In Ceylon, for instance, where innumerable evil spirits are to be found, they are charged with every untoward happening, either as themselves purposing it or as controlled or instigated by inimical magicians, or even because opportunity offers and their essential nature prompts to its seizure.[24] They interpenetrate the bodies of living men and cause illness; they may be expelled by divine power, and still, notwithstanding that they have done assault and damage, may demand and be accorded offerings, sacrifices, and libations.[25] In fact, among rude peoples, diseases are nearly universally attributed to evil spirits through the medium of possession.[26] Not seldom control is by a witch, in whose

[24] Parker, *Village Folk Tales*, p. 16; cf. Gomes, *Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, pp. 194 ff.

[25] Murray, *Ancient Egyptian Legends*, pp. 11 ff.

[26] Batchelor, *Ainu*, pp. 42–43.

body the spirit of mischief takes up its residence. Thence she sends it forth on its mission of evil, and thither it returns when its work is done. As she can thus by proxy effect evil, so can she cause it to cease.[27] Naturally this notion lingers on into advanced stages of culture, as is witnessed by the frequent mention of demoniacs in the New Testament, to say nothing of the witchcraft delusion which came on down through the Middle Ages into comparatively modern times.[28] In these advanced stages it is not unusual for these demons to specialize, so to speak, in diseases; so that in China, India, and elsewhere there may be a cholera devil, a dog-god who sends whooping cough, etc.[29] Infants are particularly liable to attack.[30] The normal result is that in some regions drugs and simples are little resorted to in sickness, medicine men and wizards are the main reliance or the only recourse.[31] These spirits

[27] Newton, *In Far New Guinea*, p. 83.

[28] Gomes, *Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, pp. 164 ff.; Thurston, *Omens and Superstitions*, pp. 176, 196; Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, p. 286.

[29] Cf. Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, iii. 148 ff., 1181.

[30] Thomas, *Anthropological Report*, p. 71.

[31] Gomes, *Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, p. 183; IAE, vi. 85 ff.

sometimes work in a way different from possession; for example, causing fever by enticing the soul from the body.[32] We may not forget that the madness of frenzy, whether as insanity or as prophetic mania, is regarded, as we have already had occasion to notice, as the result of possession.[33]

The damaging activities of these spirits may be directed not only against the persons, but against the possessions and all the various operations and pursuits of humans.[34] And such evils may at times be prevented or remedied by means as weird as the alleged or supposed disease or hurt. For example, damage by spirits to a plot of agricultural ground may be prevented by killing, boiling, and burying a black cat by night under a tree in the field.[35] All along the line of these conceptions, the promptings to magical operations are the nearly universal accompaniment.

[32] Seligmann, *Melanesians*, pp. 185 ff.

[33] Additional cases are cited in Thurston, *Omens and Superstitions*, pp. 254, 278, 279, 285.

[34] Carruthers, *Unknown Mongolia*, i. 245.

[35] Jahn, *Opfergebräuche*, p. 267.

VIII

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF PARITY OF BEING

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MANY and wide-branched are the results that flow from the anthropomorphizing by man of other objects in nature, from the transference to them, in thought, of personality with all its qualities, and from the conception that unseen and intangible, yet in effect substantial, beings exist "free" in the universe. Among the most interesting results are those that issue as almost a necessary consequence of this estimate of things — interchange of form and mode of being. Indeed, this lies on the very surface of the conception, although its logical relationship does not seem to have been pointed out.

If man, stones, trees, plants, animals, spirits, and gods are all in the same scale of existence, why should they not exchange forms, undergo metamorphosis? Why should not the soul of a man enter the body of a being in what we regard as a different scale of existence and

animate it either in play or in earnest, voluntarily or under stress of superior power exerted by some other superior in the necessary amount or quality of force, and do this either temporarily or permanently? What is to hinder, for example, man's becoming an animal, especially if he does not distinguish between his own being and that of an animal?[1] Or, on the contrary, why should not animals become men? And why should not countless changes take place among other grades of existence? In fact, according to savage man's account of things, all this does occur. Body and soul, we have seen, constitute a duality, in which, in the stage of thought we are examining, the soul is, so to speak, a free partner, able to take its flight and often to return and resume its normal activities in its own abode. It is the "separable" factor, with a life all its own, the seat of impulse, will, passion, and desire. We have, therefore, now to develop the fact of the easy passage from what modern man would regard as one grade of existence to another, either lower or higher,

[1] See above, p. 8, and cf. Rivers, *Melanesian Society*, i. 151 ff., where persons in Banks Islands are believed to be plants, animals, etc., with appropriate taboos.

or the possession of qualities by one class of beings which in a more sophisticated stage of culture is considered the exclusive possession of a different class.

Supernatural or semi-human beings are conceived as having or assuming the form of birds, animals, serpents, etc., in what we might call their normal state, but by putting off their covering of skin, feather, or scale may assume the human form divine. Among illustrations of this occur with greatest frequency the mouse, jackal, monkey, dove, and tortoise.[2] Obassi Osaw, one of the two great beings worshipped by the Etoi of Africa, was originally a man and a chief.[3] In the Oceanican mythology the firemaking gods appear to have the form of birds.[4] Maui, the Polynesian hero, was able to assume the form of animal, bird, or insect, and Rupe, another being in the same cycle of stories, changes himself into a bird.[5] Among the Ainus a goddess may

[2] Parker, *Village Folk Tales*, pp. 308 ff.; Frere, *Old Deccan Days*, pp. 183, 193; Stokes, *Indian Fairy Tales*, pp. 41 ff.; Swynnerton, *Indian Nights Entertainment*, p. 344; Natesu Sestri, *Madana Kama Raja*, pp. 56, 57.

[3] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 183, 184.

[4] Westervelt, *Legends of Maui*, *passim*.

[5] Ib., pp. 11, 20, 24, 38, 114, 125–126.

become a flower, a woman, or a frog.[6] Reference may be made in passing to the gods of Egypt, with their composite make-up of bird, reptile, or beast and man. There seems to be good reason for holding that this composite form is not original, and that the partly human form is the result of the refining influence of culture. Originally, it seems, the forms were those of birds, beasts, etc. Certainly the explanation given that the gods were once in human form and that, hard pressed by their enemies, they took the form of beasts in order to deceive or elude their oppressors, is purely animistic and in accord with the principle under exposition.

The cases where superhuman beings take human form are innumerable, apart altogether from the usual course of anthropomorphization of the gods. In the Old Testament the appearances to Adam, Abram, Lot, Gideon, and Manoah occur to the mind at once.[7] In "Hordedef's Tale" four female deities and one male god assume human shape.[8]

This being so, it is not at all wonderful

[6] Batchelor, *Ainu*, pp. 26, 262–263.

[7] Gen. 3: 8; 18: 2 ff.; 19: 1 ff.; Judges 6: 12; 13: 3, 9, etc.

[8] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, i. 33 ff.

that mating takes place between these different orders and that offspring partaking of the qualities of both are produced.[9] Especially do superhuman beings mate with humans, earth- and heaven-born beings marry. Outside the mythology of classical Greece detailing the amours of the Olympians of both sexes from Zeus down, one may recall the union of the "sons of God" and the daughters of men; the numerous cases in the poems of Homer, Pindar, and Vergil where the heroes boast a mingled ancestry partly divine; the many tribes whose eponym is a being semi-divine, such as the Koyis of India, who trace their origin to the union of Bhima and a wild woman; and the beautiful story of Ono (which is typical of several cycles of tales), who greatly longed for his ideal of feminine beauty. She finally appeared and became his wife. With the birth of their son there appeared also in the neighborhood a dog which became intensely hostile to Ono's wife. One day the animal attacked her with unusual fury; then in uncontrollable fear she resumed her former shape as a fox, leaped the fence, and disappeared. In this case the myth has

[9] Rivers, *Melanesian Society*, i. 25–26.

a rather uncertain meaning: some construe it as indicating that a fox had assumed the form of a woman; another and more probable reading is that we have to do here with a sort of genie in animal shape; a third interpretation is that the fox shape was assumed for escape. The second rendering or the first accords with the hostility of the dog, which recognized his enemy though in another (human) form.[10]

With the prevalence of such views as these it is not strange that the origin of children is often sought not in the sexual act but in some chance affair, and that "miraculous" conception or even the virgin birth is no stranger in popular beliefs.[11] It must be remembered, in considering this particularly errant idea, that nine months elapse between conception and birth, and a considerable number of weeks between conception and the knowledge that a new life has begun. The idea is therefore not surprising to one who realizes how aberrant is savage reasoning in tracing cause and effect. And when to this added the conserva-

[10] Gen. 6: 1–4; Thurston, *Omens and Superstitions*, p. 78; Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 340; J. C. Berry, in Blakeslee, *Japan and Japanese-American Relations*, p. 139.

[11] Milloué, in *Revue de l'histoire de la religion*, xlix (1904), 34–47.

tism of the primitive thinker, the tenacity with which he holds to notions that have once gained entrance, the fear of letting go of these notions and of admitting that what has been his faith is mistaken, we may begin to realize how such beliefs, once entertained, persist. Thus, in the New Hebrides "women sometimes have a notion that the origin, the beginning, of one of their children is a cocoanut, or a breadfruit."[12] Mr. Frazer points out what is indicated above, that the connection between sexual intercourse and conception is unknown.[13] To the more sophisticated, indeed, this error seems not only impossible but literally ridiculous. Mr. Frazer goes on to show that at the moment when life is first perceived the mother may be intensely observant of some natural object, and [through the ideas of interpenetration of spirit to be dealt with later] she supposes being or power to have passed from the object, entered her body, and produced the effect she feels. Consequently "she might imagine that the spirit of a kangaroo, of grass-seed, of water, or of a gum-tree (or of any other object) had passed into her, and accordingly that her child . . .

[12] Codrington, *JAI*, xviii. 310–311. [13] *FR*, Sept. 1905.

was really a kangaroo . . . though to the bodily eye it presented the outward form of a human being." Mr. Todd has also registered the fact[14] that conception is ascribed to various objects, animate and inanimate. Among American Indians rain falling on a maiden's navel induces conception.[15] And among the Nigerian peoples a child may come into being through incarnation of a human spirit or by the entrance into the mother of tree-spirits.[16]

If human beings can arise from sources such as these, it will not come as a surprise if we find that whole tribes trace descent from animals or plants, or make alliances with them. This, however, raises the large question of totemism, which can not be treated here. Mention is made of the subject in order to avoid the appearance of overlooking this very important phase or consequence of animistic thinking. The single example may be noted here of the Etoi of Africa, who hold the crab to have been grandfather to a tribe.[17]

One of the important results of this mode of thought is the belief that men, either volun-

[14] Todd, *Primitive Family*, pp. 70 ff.

[15] Fewkes, *American Ethnology*, 28*th Report*, pp. 44, 48, 65, etc.

[16] Thomas, *Anthropological Report*, p. 31.

[17] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 196.

tarily or under *force majeure* exercised by sorcerer or witch, pass from the human to the brute form of life. Among the concomitants of the belief in witches existent as late as in the eighteenth century and so balefully dominant during the Middle Ages, in Europe, were the notion of were-wolves and the idea that witches took the forms of cats, hares, or bats. Many are the tales of deadly destruction wrought by fiendish humans who, to sate a gluttony for blood or for revenge, transformed themselves into wolves and performed wolfish deeds. Equally well-known are the tales, not told as mere fiction but held as truth, of the conversion, as by Circe in the *Odyssey*, of men into beasts, or, as in the *Arabian Nights*, into stones or other forms of non-human being. A few cases only will be cited here of the persistence of such beliefs among primitive races of the present. Particularly in Africa is this idea widely diffused. The leopard-man is as real to the people of West Africa as was the were-wolf to the European peasant of the fifteenth century. This leopard-man assumes at pleasure the form of the animal from which he takes his name, preying on strangers or on his own

people.[18] The Fangs hold that under the magic of an enemy they may be changed into monkeys.[19] In Oceanica Maui transforms an enemy into a dog.[20] Among the Dyaks a man may be suspected of changing himself into a tiger, and is immune to ordinary methods of punishment. Only strong medicine is equal to the task of discipline.[21] In other parts of Malaysia also men transform themselves into tigers or into fishes, and a woman becomes an ape.[22] In India it would seem as if there were hardly any animal shape which may not become the refuge of man or the means of his working evil deeds.[23] In other words, as the gods of Egypt were regarded as abandoning in part their own shape and taking that of animals, birds, or reptiles, so human beings could put on the forms or grades of life of lower animals (as we regard them and primitive peoples did not).[24]

[18] Milligan, *Fetish Folk*, p. 33; Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 71, 82, 191–195, 247–254, and chap. VII.

[19] Milligan, pp. 123–124.

[20] Westervelt, *Legends of Maui*, p. 80.

[21] Gomes, *Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, pp. 265–278.

[22] Skeat, *Malay Magic*, p. 162; Cox, *Folk-lore*, chap. II.

[23] Thurston, *Omens and Superstitions*, p. 260, *et passim*.

[24] Interesting reading on this whole subject of metamorphosis will be found in Lang's *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, chap. IV.

One may go still farther and find humans transforming themselves into inanimate objects. So the Basques have a story of a witch who determined to drown the crew of a fishing boat. The boat was to meet three waves, the first and second of which the boat might ride, but the third, which would be the witch herself, would overwhelm the boat and its crew. But the cabin boy overheard the plot and the means of foiling it also came to him, so he launched a harpoon into the heart of the third wave, which divided and dashed on the shore, a mass of bloody foam. On the captain's return, he found his wife dying of her wound.[25]

Sometimes, before power can be obtained to effect these transformations, either on self or on another, some magical rite or process must be performed or undergone, or some chance happening must have been encountered. In the Far East a common belief is that an animal that has drunk water which has lain for twenty years in a human skull acquires power to assume the human form at will.[26] This is alleged to have been the case of a vixen

[25] Vinson, *Le Folk-lore du Pays Basque*, p. 20.

[26] C. T. Collyer, in *Baltimore Christian Advocate*, Oct. 23, 1913.

in China, who became a woman, the "Cleopatra of the East," and this transformation led to the founding of the first kingdom in Korea.

If the higher ranks of life might be changed into lower grades, the reverse process was equally possible. It is established that in Egypt the practice was prevalent which until recent times was current throughout Africa of sacrificing attendants upon the death of a chief that their souls might serve his in the spirit world. But the softening effects of culture in the Nile land refined away in early historic times this cruel custom. The problem remained — how provide service for the dead nobles and chiefs? The difficulty was surmounted by magic. Images of clay and pottery were created and placed in the tomb, and these, by utterance of the magic formula, were animated in the spirit world as attendants of the deceased. These little figures, called *ushabtiu*, are found literally by hundreds in the tombs of Egypt. There is reason to believe that the same principle was employed in Korea, Japan, China, and Mongolia. There at the tombs are often found, in clay, wood, and stone, effigies of attendants and of various

animals. The most reasonable explanation of these, which is borne out by explanations given to the writer by Koreans, is that these were supposed to be animated in the spirit world to do the will of the deceased nobles or rulers at whose tombs they were placed. Confirmation of this is found in the *Nihongi* (one of the books of Japan coming nearest in estimation to that we render to our Scriptures), where the book professes to give an account of events occurring 2 B.C.–3 A.D. The story narrates the burial up to the neck of the personal attendants of a deceased brother of the mikado, this being the method of execution in such cases. But the laments of the victims so affected the mikado that when the empress died, clay figures were substituted. The dating of this event is probably wrong, since at the funeral of an empress in 247 A.D., sacrifice of attendants was still in vogue.[27]

[27] Aston, *Shinto*, pp. 56–58; Underwood, *Religions of Eastern Asia*, pp. 89–90.

IX

DEATH NOT ALWAYS REGARDED AS INEVITABLE

IX

DEATH NOT ALWAYS REGARDED AS INEVITABLE

A FACT that has been before us incidentally, though not the subject of specific remark, is the age-long belief in the continued existence of the soul. We have noted that the soul is "the separable factor" in man's duality, "with a life all its own." It would be normal then next to examine this continuance of life beyond death, to determine its character. But before discussing primitive conceptions concerning the dead, their state and powers, it is important to note that there are hints from widely separated regions which suggest that once there was a belief nearly or quite universal that death is not inevitable. It is likely that in the youth of the race, death was practically always the result of violence — from man or beast — or of accident. And it follows from what we have just noticed of the parity of being and the attribution of life to

insensate objects, that even accidents would not be recognized as such but would be interpreted as the result of purposive activities. Moreover, evidence is abundant that, in a somewhat advanced stage of human history, man was a contemporary of huge and ferocious animals which have become extinct. While cave deposits reveal that he knew how to master some of these, on the other hand it must be conceded that cave men must often have succumbed, if all did not eventually lose their lives, to the attacks or have come off second best in the encounters which they themselves brought on. The increase in the numbers of human beings is always attended by the mastery and extinction of beasts of prey. In the days when men were few and beasts were present in numbers now hardly conceivable, the number of casualties to men either in the hunt or when themselves hunted must have been great. We have to take into account also feuds among men in the undisciplined state. When the stage of culture was low, feuds between tribes and clans, which, be it remembered, were small in those days, were often waged to extinction. Within the memory of man the sparseness of population in Australia has been

with high probability of correctness ascribed to the feuds which for a single reason raged between different tribes. The mortality from this cause must have been great. And how complete may have been the slaughter in such cases is seen when we remember that so late as the time of Samuel a numerous people was devoted to extinction in the name of religion — in this case religion being the mask for human animosities.[1] Under circumstances perhaps more numerous than we can imagine, men, women, and children were slaughtered to the last individual.

From what has preceded in the way of showing early man's conceptions of the potency of things about him, what would now be regarded as accident was by him regarded as the result of purposive action by the objects which seemed to work disaster. If a limb fell from a tree in a storm and killed a man, the explanation was that the tree had cast its weapon in anger, or the wind had, with intent, flung this missile with deadly aim. Stories have passed in recent times of African tribes that hewed down and chopped to bits a tree, a limb from which had caused the death of one

[1] 1 Sam. 15.

of their number. Similarly, if a man were drowned by river or ocean, it was the angry flood or the offended sea which had removed from this life the deceased human.

Recalling once more the steadfastness with which man holds to convictions once entertained, remembering that the new has always had to fight, and fight hard, for entrance into his mind, we may regard the instances to be adduced in which the belief that death is always an *ab extra* event, to be accounted for by causes other than "natural," as illustrative of and probably presumptive of the existence of the same belief in much wider circles than those in which it now obtains. It is best accounted for as a "superstition," i.e., as "something left over from earlier times." To be sure, in some cases, perhaps in all, the belief has taken on the complexion of a more advanced culture, it explains the death by "spiritual" means instead of by mere brute or physical force. This is a way that superstitions have. They fit themselves to the environment, mental or physical, which has wrapped itself about them.

From Australia quite concordant testimony from competent observers is accessible. Thus

R. B. Smyth cites the statement of Mr. Daniel Bunce (curator of the Botanical Gardens at Geelong), a man well acquainted with the blacks, to the effect that "no tribe he has ever met with believe in the possibility of a man's dying a natural death. If a man is taken ill, it is at once assumed that some member of a hostile tribe has stolen some of his hair. This is quite enough to cause serious illness. If the man continues sick and gets worse, it is assumed that the hair has been burned by his enemy. Such an act, they say, is sufficient to imperil his life. If the man dies, it is assumed that the thief has choked his victim and taken away his kidney fat."

Mr. Smyth continues: "Mr. John Green says that the men of the Yarrow tribe firmly believe that no one ever dies a natural death. A man or a woman dies because of the wicked arts practised by some member of a hostile tribe." [2]

In Appendix 3 to the same work (ii. 289–290) Albert A. C. Le Souef accounts for the paucity of population in part by the fact that a death by disease involves the death of others, because the first case was believed to be

[2] *Aborigines of Victoria*, i. 110.

caused by sorcery, and a murdering expedition is at once carried out for vengeance. (This in turn starts a blood feud, and so on.)

Taplin remarks of the Narrinyeri: "When a man dies they conclude at once that sorcery has been the cause of the mournful event, and that either *ngadhungi* or *millin* [two methods of sorcery] have been practised against him." [3]

Spencer and Gillen testify that "no such thing as natural death is realized by the native; a man who dies has of necessity been killed by some other man, or perhaps even by a woman." [4]

Dawson's affirmation is quite concordant: "Natural deaths are generally — but not always — attributed to the malevolence and the spells of an enemy belonging to another tribe." [5]

In New Guinea the same belief holds, as witnessed by Newton.

"About Wedau and Wamira the spirits of the dead go eventually to some place to the eastward of Cape Frere, in a valley in the mountains called Iola, the approach to the

[3] *Narrinyeri*, in *Native Tribes of South Australia*, p. 19.
[4] *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 48.
[5] Dawson, *Australian Aborigines*, p. 63.

abode of the spirits being through a hole in the ground. When the spirit arrives it is questioned at once, 'Where have you come from?' 'What have you come for?' just as every time you go into a village every one who meets you asks you (these questions). The newly arrived one says, 'I have come from Wedau' or 'Wamira,' as the case may be, or the answer may state more explicitly the section of the village, and 'Where else should I go except to my own people?' Then the question is asked, 'Who sent you?' and for answer the name of some sorcerer or witch is given, the one responsible for the death."[6]

Indirect testimony is furnished by Neuhass to the same effect for German New Guinea, whose people separate souls with reference to post mortem continuance according as they died by the sword or by magic — the two methods which they recognize of passing from this life. The Mafulu of this island regard a death otherwise unaccounted for as due to spirits acting under sorcerers. An exception is conceived, however, in the case of very old persons, which seems to show the transition

[6] *In Far New Guinea*, p. 219.

to a more advanced knowledge.[7] And in Hood Peninsula, British New Guinea, death is the result of the activities of spirits or magicians.[8] Gomes asserts that in Borneo all sickness (and therefore death not otherwise accounted for) by external means is caused by spirit possession.[9] Among Melanesians: "It must . . . be remembered that . . . death is not admitted to occur without some obvious cause such as a spear thrust. Therefore when vigorous and active members of the community die, it becomes necessary to explain their fate, and such deaths are firmly believed to be produced by sorcery."[10] In far away Africa "nearly all diseases, bad luck, misfortune, sorrow, and death are caused by witchcraft, i.e., by some one using a fetish to curse a person."[11]

Among the Indians of Guiana, "Every death, every illness, is regarded not as the result of natural law, but as the work of a kenaima (i.e., a man possessed by a spirit for the purpose of blood revenge, and able to

[7] Williamson, *Ways of South Sea Savage*, p. 286.
[8] *JAI*, xxviii (1899), 216 ff.
[9] *Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, p. 183.
[10] Seligmann, *Melanesians*, p. 279.
[11] Weeks, *Primitive Bakongo*, p. 219.

send his spirit forth to inflict evil). Such a kenaima is . . . the real or supposed cause of almost every evil, and especially of every death."[12]

Concordant testimony is given by Brett:[13] "A person dies — and it is supposed that an enemy has secured the agency of an evil spirit to compass his death." A sorcerer is employed to discover the guilty individual, and a relative of the deceased is charged with the work of vengeance. He is a kenaima, possessed by the spirit of destruction.

It is the "left-overs" that often reveal to the discriminating observer the conditions which are implied, which surrounded the full bloom of what have become survivals. It is not difficult to imagine, and it is in accord with primitive psychology to presume, that the few cases here brought together, which might conceivably be much extended by definite research, suppose a much larger area over which such ideas were regnant.

[12] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 329.
[13] *Indian Tribes of Guiana*, pp. 357 ff.

X

THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL

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WHILE according to the facts adduced in the last chapter it is clear that a belief has existed that man might, were it not for accident or the like, continue to live on as a duality in this present life, the fact of death stared men in the face, and with equal intensity the belief was held that in death man did not cease to exist, but that the soul lived on. That the appearance of the deceased in dreams had no small part in the foundation of this belief seems almost certain. We have already seen[1] that dreams were regarded not as phantasies but as realities, and so the dead who were seen in the dream state were regarded as souls of the deceased appearing to the living. And other lines of evidence no doubt seemed to open to primitive man. At any rate, the fact of this belief, at least as far back as neolithic times, is evinced by the

[1] Above, pp. 23 ff.

burial with the dead of utensils evidently meant for the service of the deceased in the land where he found himself after death. This faith is shown also by the acts of devotion or worship to the departed spirit, and by material provision of food and other comforts for the soul either at the grave or elsewhere.[2] Similarly evidential are the means taken to facilitate the soul's exit by door, window, or roof, even through holes made in the wall of house or tent; and the same value attaches to the evident effort to prevent the soul's return by carrying the corpse, to which it is supposed fondly to cling, by devious ways to its last resting place. Like conclusions are forced by the feasts and celebrations on anniversaries of death or burial, which attest not only affectionate remembrance, but first and principally belief in the soul's continuance. This belief in the soul's continuance is perhaps

[2] Graves of Greeks and Romans have been found where permanent conduits in the grave mounds permitted the passage of liquids and viands to the corpse — cf. Frazer's *Pausanias*, X. 4: 7, and the editor's comment on the passage; and the same is true of graves in Mongolia, though in this case the evident purpose was not the entry of food but the exit of the ghost, as the openings are at the side of the tomb — cf. *Geographical Magazine*, May, 1913, p. 651.

the most momentous and the choicest, as well as the oldest, that animistic races have left to us. The clear beginning of the doctrine so prized in all religions save Gautama's, viz., that concerning the immortality of the soul, is here in its embryonic stage. We have already noted that one means, perhaps the chief one, to the acquisition of this idea was the appearance of the dead in dreams. The deceased, so the conclusion ran, was not dead, he still existed, and in his own form. It may be remarked, *en passant*, that if religion inheres at all in this belief, then religion is everywhere existent; for no race has yet been discovered which had not faith in the continuance of life beyond the grave. Once more, if religion inheres not in belief but in the practices to which belief gives rise, then in the care for the well-being of the soul of one that has passed, so widely prevalent, religion is no less shown to be universal.

To suppose, however, that the content of the primitive idea is that of full-fledged immortality or unending existence would be a serious misunderstanding. The conception of deathlessness in its absolute sense is probably never present among savages. Primitive

philosophy does not sound so profound depths. Hence, because "immortality" says more than is contained in the savage's concepts of future life, the word "continuance" has been employed to express the notion found among the uncivilized. On the other hand, one must be on his guard when it is affirmed that savages have no idea of immortality. In the strict sense this is true, but only in so far as uncultured peoples have not reached any conception which at all approaches that of endlessness. They have no enduring records. Oral tradition, which may easily become confused and dim, carries them back only a few generations — four or five, say. So the notion of the soul life may be either indefinite — or rather, undefined — or may be regarded as limited to a certain number, greater or less, of lives like that already passed. Indeed, the life may have degrees, so to speak. Thus the African Etoi and Bakongo believe that "though ghosts have died once, they can die a second time, and so become more dead than before."[3] Among the Haida a war party is always accompanied by a shaman, among

[3] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 8, 24, etc.; Weeks, *Primitive Bakongo*, pp. 223–224, 243–244.

whose duties is to kill the souls of the enemy.[4] In Fiji the natives believe that there is a certain Samu Yalo ("killer of souls") who haunts the path to the realm of the dead, and when a ghost comes along rushes out to kill it with an ax unless it succeeds in escaping. Another Fijian monster lies in wait and kills the souls of bachelors, so that they never reach heaven. In the same islands a ghost that is troublesome to the living may have his case settled by his unconditional demise.[5] That mortals may die again seems reasonable if only it be remembered that even gods grow old and die, according to "the cultured Egyptians." "Very aged was Ra, and the saliva ran down from his mouth and fell upon the earth" — a perfect picture of senility.[6] Heiti-eibib, a Hottentot hero-god, had the habit of dying.[7] In Polynesia Maui's wife used also to kill the gods.[8]

[4] Swanton, *Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, i. 40–51, cited by Halliday, *Greek Divination*, p. 95.

[5] Williams, *Fiji*, i. 244 ff.; Wilkes, *U. S. Exploring Expedition*, iii. 85.

[6] Murray, *Ancient Egyptian Legends*, p. 81; cf. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 54 ff.

[7] Hahn, *Tsuni-Goam*, pp. 56 ff.

[8] Westervelt, *Legends of Maui*, p. 127.

XI

MODIFICATIONS OF THE IDEA OF CONTINUANCE

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THE continuance of the human soul's life is conditioned in various ways in different regions and stages of culture. Some tribes assign to souls a definite number of *post-mortem* lives, which number may, however, have stood for indefinite continuance, being the tradition remaining from an earlier stage when ability to count above a small aggregate was uncommon. Thus Dyaks allot to the soul seven lives, after which it is annihilated.[1] Or continuance may be not the common fate, only that of a select few. The basis of selection then naturally varies.[2] It may be that of descent or station in life. Thus only chiefs survive in Fiji, and among the Tongans of the South Sea Islands.[3] Or the

[1] Gomes, *Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, p. 208.
[2] Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, p. 232.
[3] Mariner, *Natives of Tonga Islands*, ii. 129 ff.

mode of death may have something to do with it, as when New Guineans separate souls according as they died by sword or by magic — the two causes of death allowed to exist by this people.[4] Or (and this state of affairs exists, almost certainly, only in a somewhat advanced stage of culture) ethical standards may be established, and future life may be conditioned on compliance with such standards in this life. Such an idea may be found in a comparatively small area, neighboring regions showing no knowledge of such a test.[5] On the other hand, it has happened that while such standards ostensibly exist, magical practices in effect reduce the test to its lowest terms or even to the vanishing point. So with the "Negative Confession" of Egypt. This is clear from its evident use by practically every or any person, independent of character, who was by the formula of the Book of the Dead primed to override or evade obstacles to the passing of the soul to the happy abode.[6] In parts of Melanesia the ultimate death of the soul is maintained, its

[4] Neuhass, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. 149 ff.
[5] Codrington, *Melanesians*, pp. 274 ff.
[6] *HR*, March, 1914.

survival seeming to depend on survival in the memory of posterity.[7]

A different twist is given to the idea of continuance when the notion takes either of two somewhat closely related forms of expression, transformation or human reincarnation. Transformation, or change of mode of existence on earth, we have seen to be a natural consequence of that "parity of being" which is the prime characteristic of the animistic manner of thought. Is there any reason, *a priori*, why this should not operate when the soul is discarnate, unfleshed? As a matter of fact, the continuance of the soul in other forms of existence than the human is a widely diffused notion. Transmigration is not limited to philosophic developments like Buddhism, with its Jataka Tales of the 500 births of the Buddha. Indeed, it is practically certain that the transmigration of philosophic India is one of the noblest and most fruitful borrowings of the Aryans from the Kolarian and Dravidian aborigines. When these *post-mortem* transformations take place, the continuance may be indefinite or definitely limited. The Kai of German New Guinea hold that ghosts are

[7] Seligmann, *Melanesians*, p. 192.

changed first into some sort of game animals, then into insects, and then comes "the last death." [8] This suggests the idea of a progressive diminution of vitality or fading away into nothingness, and may be a result of observation of the fading memory of survivors. In Melanesia, where ethical ideas condition future life, after doing penance, the soul takes the form of various animals, such as the flying fox.[9] Transformation into an owl is a frequent notion, as among the Arabs, and in Madagascar among the Haida.[10] One Cingalese woman (who has been murdered) becomes successively a turtle, a mango tree, a creeper, and a blue lotus. Another changes into a cobra.[11] In the Solomon Islands ghosts are incarnated in various animals, while among the Melanesians men at death became sharks, alligators, lizards, birds (the frigate bird *par excellence*), snakes, and the like.[12] The reincarnation or appearance of the dead in the

[8] Neuhass, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. 150 ff.

[9] Brown, *Melanesians*, pp. 192 ff.

[10] Doutte, *L'Afrique du Nord*, p. 361; *Folk-lore*, ii. 341; Swanton, *North Pacific Expedition*, p. 27.

[11] Parker, *Village Folk Tales of Ceylon*, pp. 113 ff., 132.

[12] Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, p. 65; Codrington, *Melanesians*, pp. 179 ff.

form of snakes is both common and ancient; it is, of course, easily accounted for by the frequency of the animal among graves, the looseness of the earth and the crevices therein making easy the formation of their burrows. The reader of Homer and Vergil will recall the pertinent cases there narrated, while the vases and other monuments of art abundantly illustrate the belief — although sometimes the idea is modified by regarding the reptile as the "genius" of the departed. The naturalness of the idea is attested by its occurrence in regions as widely separated as New Guinea and Colombia.[13] Among the Mafulu of New Guinea the ghost may be transformed into a fungus living on the mountain.[14] And among the Narrinyeri of Australia rocks may be the form taken by deceased ancestors.[15]

Belief that the soul is reincarnated in human posterity is so natural, once the idea

[13] Miss Harrison, *Prolegomena* and *Themis*, *passim;* Neuhass, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. 515 ff.; Joyce, *South American Archeology*, p. 11.

[14] Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, p. 281.

[15] Wood, *Native Tribes of South Australia*, p. 202. Other cases in other parts of the world may be found in Declé, *Three Years in Africa*, p. 74; Das, *Journey to Lhasa*, pp. 56, 131 ff., 138, etc.; Keller, *Madagascar*, p. 85; *Folk-lore*, ii. 437; Arctander, *Apostle of Alaska*, p. 105.

of transmigration is entertained, that it can not surprise us to find it widespread. When we remember how feature and gesture of infant or child may recall those of some deceased member of the family, one fruitful source of this idea may perhaps be disclosed. For the notion is not the exclusive possession of the philosophical, though we have stories from Greece, where it was incorporated in philosophical creeds, of men who recognized votive offerings dedicated in a former existence, or find poets like Vergil recounting the method of return and telling of the antecedent draught from the waters of Lethe. So well known is the belief that only a few typical cases need be adduced from primitive examples. Baganda women fear to pass places where executions have taken place or spots alleged to be haunted by dangerous ghosts, lest the ghosts enter them to begin another earthly life.[16] Similarly the Bakongo of the Congo region hold firmly to the reincarnation of the human spirit in human form.[17] So usual a happening is this among the Ibo of Nigeria

[16] Roscoe, *The Baganda*, pp. 20, 46, 124, *et passim;* cf. pp. 47, 289.

[17] Weeks, *Primitive Bakongo*, p. 115.

that, when a birth takes place, the doctor is called in to decide which ancestor has come back to earth. Indeed, an ancestor may there scissate and become incarnate in more than one descendant in any given generation.[18] The Kayans of Borneo also hold firmly to the doctrine, as do various tribes of Australian Bushmen.[19]

The same principle of parity of being permits interchange and transformation, to which we have become now so accustomed, to take place in another direction. The ghost may be changed into an evil spirit or demon or equally repulsive form. A Cingalese spirit which had temporarily left its body returned to find that body untenantable and addressed his wife in a dream. She supposed that he had become a Yaka (evil spirit) and was correspondingly terrified. Of course the wife's explanation to herself of the dream is excellent evidence of belief in the possibility and actuality of such transformations.[20] The Melanesian ghosts may assume the form of compositely-shaped

[18] Thomas, *Anthropological Report*, pp. 30–31.

[19] Hose and McDougall, *Pagan Tribes*, ii. 47; Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, pp. 119 ff., 335 ff., and *Northern Tribes*, pp. 145 ff., 330 ff., 448 ff.

[20] Parker, *Village Folk Tales of Ceylon*, p. 170.

demons.[21] The souls of the dead may in some cases become vampires and feed horribly on the living — indeed this terrible habit may have been formed before death.[22] See also below (Chap. XII) for other transformations.

[21] Codrington, *Melanesians*, pp. 258 ff.
[22] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 192–193.

XII

CONDITION OF THE DISCARNATE SOUL

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SINCE evidence of the existence of the belief that the soul lives on is so indubitable, the question arises — what is its condition? In what state does the discarnate spirit find itself after final separation from the body? And first, as to what we may be allowed to call, for want of a better term, its physical condition.

We have already noted that soul is conceived as having both form and substance, the latter, so to speak, greatly rarefied. Moreover, it has been brought to our attention that the most common idea concerning form is that the soul is a replica of the body it inhabited. Consistency in primitive thinking is not to be assumed, as we have seen, nor are logical processes among primitives quite the same as ours. Yet when a disembodied soul took up its *post-mortem* residence in a serpent, for example, we may not suppose that that

soul was still regarded as human in shape. But so far as the author has discovered, no decisive evidence exists on this point. The probabilities favor greatly the supposition that in such cases transformation of the soul shape was supposed to have taken place. Evidence of the common idea, retention by the soul of its human shape, has been before us. We have noted that some tribes mutilate the body of the dead, thinking that by so doing they inflict like wounds upon the soul and thus impose incapacity for harm upon the ghost, the double of the body. The Omahas slit the soles of a murdered man's feet that his spirit may be unable to return and cause damage to the people.[1] Mangaeans prefer death in battle — men are then in their full strength; disease weakens them, and souls have the nature of the body at death. Barongo believe that souls are young or old, according to the age at death, and so do the Indians of Gran Chaco. Naga tribes of Manipur think that ghosts bear whatever tattoo marks, mutilations, or other blemishes or embellishments occurred on the body. Some people carry this idea so far as to prefer

[1] Fletcher and La Flesche, *27th Report*, etc., p. 215.

death before decay of natural powers sets in, and so commit suicide or are buried alive, that the soul may continue to exist in full vigor.[2]

Having form and substance, the soul has certain physical needs. It hungers, thirsts, feels cold and heat. The degrees of grossness of these wants vary greatly. Sometimes the hunger, thirst, and wants and passions may be appeased by the mere spirit or ghost of food, drink, etc.; and the ghosts are served by the spirits or (as our theosophical friends might be imagined as saying) the astral bodies of dishes, implements, or weapons which are destroyed (i.e., killed) that their spirits may accompany the ghost into the spirit land. Indeed, this is by all odds the most prevalent conception. Sometimes it is the more evanescent or the more vital elements, such as the blood, which are used by the ghost, as in the celebrated case of Tiresias in the *Odyssey*.[3] The cases already cited of food, drink, weapons, utensils, and the like possessing souls and being offered or placed with the dead, oftentimes being broken or mutilated so as to "kill"

[2] Cases are cited in Frazer's *Dying God*, pp. 9–14.

[3] Book XI.

them, furnish direct testimony to the supposed needs of the ghost. The hunger felt by the disembodied soul is vividly expressed by most African tribes, whose belief is that ghosts can and do eat even human bodies.[4] Ghosts also suffer from cold, hence New Guineans, and others, make fires at the graves, and even build huts, so that when the ghosts come up from the body they may find comfort.[5]

Ghosts have voices, too, but thin and shadowy like themselves. They chirp like crickets or utter their words in whistling tones. So the wizards by ventriloquistic art impose upon the credulous, and by wheezing utterance produce the effect of communications from a shadowy being or from the ground. Note the indications of shamanistic practice in the Prophet Isaiah (8: 19; 29: 4).

What we may regard as the disposition of the ghost is by most peoples held to be fixed by the character of the person while on earth.

[4] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 224–225, 232–233, 238, etc.; *ERE*, vi. 65 ff. The testimony is being exhaustively collected in Frazer, *Belief in Immortality* — see the Index, under "Food."

[5] Brown, *Melanesians and Polynesians*, pp. 442 ff.; Neuhass, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. 518; Frazer, *Belief in Immortality*, i. 150–152.

Was he cruel, warlike, passionate, generous, revengeful in the body, so will he be as a discarnate ghost. So, for instance, the New Guineans hold.[6] Only account must be taken of a very common notion, that the ghost is endowed with increased power.[7] One might find many reasons for this common idea. The general fearsomeness of the unknown and invisible, the fact that the ghost has joined the terrible host of free spirits, its very remoteness, combine to add the idea of power. That which is distant in space or time gains enchantment and enlargement from the imagination, which is the faculty most employed in this sphere. Australians credit to their ancestors deeds to themselves impossible, though they are themselves their ancestors reincarnate.[8] The greed and liking for possessions which existed on earth are attributed in some parts to the spirit, and among the Bakongo, for instance, this desire is satisfied by placing all the deceased's wealth about the grave.[9] The soul's assumed mobility,

[6] Neuhass, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. 142 ff.
[7] Roscoe, *Baganda*, pp. 282 ff.
[8] Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes*, pp. 489 ff
[9] Weeks, *Primitive Bakongo*, p. 278.

such as was displayed in its power to leave the body during life and to make investigations at even a considerable distance, is not lost but rather enhanced. It has become a free agent, no longer bound by the body's necessities and limitations of locomotion, at liberty to roam unfettered, to use in the wide universe its powers — those that remain or are acquired in its new condition. If it in earthly life could leave the body temporarily and like the lightning speed hither and thither, now, disfleshed, its mobility has gained by the change.

Especially is it believed that spirits acquire a larger knowledge. Not only do they gain a completer survey of the past and the present, but a knowledge of the future becomes theirs. According as their dispositions prompt, they become helpers of their survivors or hostilely active against them.

Particularly interesting in this connection is the relationship of the ghost and other beings to warning and prediction. Among the powers of the soul is that of return and manifestation to survivors. Melanesian, Andaman, and African ghosts, for instance, reappear to and converse with their people

and become a medium of information.[10] Particularly through dreams do they mediate — a performance recorded in antiquity and attested by present day belief over a large area.[11] Indeed, it is through the dream that approach to human comprehension is most easily made by divine, superhuman, or discarnate powers, the spirit in this condition being loosed from fleshly trammels. The human spirit in sleep is regarded as not bound by quite the same inflexible laws to the bodily limitations. The employment of the dream as a means of information or warning at once occurs to the reader — Jacob, Joseph, Pharaoh, Nebuchadrezzar; classical cases will be found in Pindar, *Olympiacs*, XIII, 105, and Pausanias, X, xxxiii, 11. It will be remembered that in an earlier section the importance of the dream as an index to animistic thought was dwelt upon at some length. One specimen of developed classical and philosophical thought on this has been summarized from Jamblichus.

[10] Seligmann, *Melanesians*, pp. 190 ff.; Kloss, *In the Andamans*, p. 296; Weeks, *Congo Cannibals*, pp. 264–265.

[11] Herodotus, IV, 172; Pomponius Mela, I. viii. 8; Mauss, *Origines des pouvoirs magiques*, p. 15; Haddon, *Anthropological Essays*, p. 179.

"There is nothing unworthy of belief in what you have been told concerning sleep and the meaning of dreams. I will explain it thus. The soul has a twofold life, a lower and a higher. In sleep the soul is released from the constraint of the body, and enters as one emancipated on its divine life of intelligence. Then as the noble faculty which beholds the objects that truly are, the objects in the world of intelligence, stirs within and awakens to its power, who can be surprised that the mind, which contains within itself the principles of all that happens, should in this, the state of liberation, discern the future in those antecedent principles which will make that future what it is to be? The nobler part of the soul is thus united by abstraction to higher natures, and becomes a participant in the wisdom and foreknowledge of the gods. Recorded examples of this are numerous and well authenticated; instances too occur every day. Numbers of sick by sleeping had their cure revealed to them in dreams. Would not Alexander's army have perished but for a dream in which Dionysius pointed out the means of safety? Was not the siege of Aphritis raised through a dream

sent by Jupiter Ammon to Lysander? 'The night time of the body is the daytime of the soul.'" [12]

The student of anthropology will at once recognize here the advanced justification for beliefs which go back very far for their origins. But even in the advanced stage of thought represented by Jamblichus there are present elements that are duplicable today in the most primitive regions.

Several doors open here to alluring bypaths — to inspiration, prediction, oracles, on the one side, these presuming a favoring disposition on the part of the ghost; and, on the other, to necromancy and the "black art" or black magic, if the ghost or his control be evil. Melanesians and Africans say that the soul may return to seize and inspire the unconscious shaman or prophet to pregnant utterance.[13] We have said "unconscious" — for it seems practically established that, in the earlier stages of culture, prediction and the delivery of the oracle took place only when the medium was in ecstasy. Vergil's description of the

[12] *Theurgia or the Egyptian Mysteries*, Part III, chap. vii.

[13] Codrington, *Melanesians*, pp. 218 ff.; Roscoe, *Baganda*, p. 113.

raging sybil will recur to the classical student.[14] Plato says that "inspired and true divination is not attained to by anyone in his full senses, but only when the power of thought is fettered by sleep or disease, or some paroxysm of frenzy."[15] It is well known that the American Indians regarded the simple or mentally incompetent as peculiarly endowed and in closer touch with the supernatural than those possessed of all their mental powers. In the Old Testament there is an unconscious testimony to the veracity of many parts of the narrative, guaranteed by psychological conclusions, in the fact that the earlier phases of prophecy and prediction are described as involving the ecstatic state or a condition of unconsciousness. Such are the use of the dream, the case of Balaam, the prophets among whom Saul found himself, this form of affection being communicable or "catching" — compare the "dancing mania" of the middle ages — and Elisha, for whom music was in at least one case a prerequisite to the delivery of the oracle — the "hand of the Lord" (2 Kings 3 : 15) being the Old Testament expression for the modern psychological term

[14] *Æneid*, VI, 45 ff., 77 ff. [15] Timæus, 71.

"ecstasy" adopted from the Greek. So among perhaps most primitive peoples, like the Melanesians and Africans referred to above, warnings from the supernatural and even knowledge of other matters, as of charms, are supposed to be received under such conditions.[16]

Ghosts do not figure merely as indicators of coming events or as guardians against evil fortune. Their larger capacity for action may make them powerful intercessors with still higher supernatural beings or spirits, through shamans who control them or know them intimately.[17] Or their own success in their earthly vocation makes them interested in survivors who follow their trade. In Africa the spirit of a dead hunter is powerful to help in the chase, and is propitiated to that end.[18] In Melanesia the help of ghosts in securing the right kind of weather, in performing feats of healing, in success with the fishing net or line, and in agriculture is obtained by sacrifices

[16] So the Australians: Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 435–437. On the facts at large cf. Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, pp. 181–182.

[17] Carruthers, *Unknown Mongolia*, i. 243.

[18] Weeks, *Primitive Bakongo*, pp. 181–183.

and offerings.[19] Indeed, from the inhabitants of Ghosttown may come some of the good gifts, agricultural, for instance, which make life worth living.[20] The spirits of the dead may keep a watchful eye upon survivors, preventing or punishing infractions of tribal customs that involve offence to themselves, and warning against repetition by inflicting sickness or failure in various enterprises.[21] Foundation sacrifice had the purpose of procuring for the structure the protection of the spirits of the dead.[22]

On the other hand, ghosts may be among the spirits whose malevolence needs to be guarded against. In fact, among the *post mortem* transformations may be that into ill disposed spirits. Usually, when this is conceived to be the case, the cause is found in some misfortune in life or death. Among the Ibo, for instance, a childless woman, a wifeless or moneyless man, or a suicide may as ghosts attempt to increase the population

[19] Codrington, *Melanesians*, pp. 132 ff.: Lambert, *Mœurs et superstitions*, pp. 24, 26, 218, 224 ff., 293 ff.; Turner, *Samoa*, pp. 345 ff.

[20] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 238–239.

[21] Seligmann, *Melanesians*, pp. 192, 310.

[22] B. D. Eerdmans, in *Expositor*, Nov. 1913, p. 197.

of the underworld by attacks upon those left on earth.[23] Similarly in New Guinea those who die in childbirth, suicides, and those who have lost their heads become maleficent.[24] The Omahas hold that ghosts of the murdered return and inflict punishment by disease, or by causing the wind to blow from hunter to game and so to spoil his sport.[25] Among Congo cannibals the soul seen in dreams is a wandering human spirit aiming at evil in its travels, and the witch doctor may be hired to kill it. The nostrils of the dead are plugged immediately after death to keep the spirit in the body as long as possible.[26] If the ghost is for any reason unwelcome in the nether world and is driven out, it becomes malicious and aims at mischief, either inflicting positive ills by sending storms and like disasters or preventing success in various pursuits.[27] In some cases ghosts are normally neutral, and their disposition and consequent actions depend upon the treatment they receive from

[23] Thomas, *Anthropological Report*, p. 31.
[24] Frazer, *Belief in Immortality*, i. 212.
[25] Fletcher and La Flesche, *27th Report*, p. 215.
[26] Weeks, *Congo Cannibals*, p. 262.
[27] *Ib.*, pp. 263–264, 269.

the living.[28] So that the well-being of survivors depends on propitiation by gifts and ceremonies or on manifestations of abiding affection.[29] The duties of classic Greeks and Romans to their dead — careful and honorable burial, celebration by games at the funeral or on anniversaries — recur at once to the mind: and in these and other matters these peoples handed down in memory at least and often in ritual the doings and beliefs of far away ancestors. Close parallels to classic customs have been observed among African, Melanesian, and Polynesian peoples, where not only is the funeral offering placed on the ground, but dramatic performances in honor of the dead take place.[30] Among some races, such as British New Guineans and the Mafulu, ghosts are always malevolent.[31]

Among the exercises of the enlarged powers

[28] Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, pp. 65, 68, 74, 75, 76, 81 ff.; Roscoe, *Baganda*, pp. 116, 278, 286.

[29] Taplin, *Narrinyeri*, p. 19; Curr, *Australian Race*, i. 87; Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 461, 463, 473; Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes*, p. 507, and *Native Tribes*, p. 511.

[30] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 18; Brown, *Melanesians and Polynesians*, pp. 214 ff.; Milligan, *Fetish Folk*, pp. 233–236.

[31] Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, p. 281 and *Mafulu Mountain People*, pp. 243 ff., 266 ff., 297 ff.; *JAI*, xxviii (1899), 216 ff.

attributed to ghosts by quite diverse peoples is one which, as we shall see later, they possess in common with non-human spirits. This is the infliction of disease in an access of malignancy. Such a belief is held by American Indians, South Sea islanders, Hindus, New Guineans, and many others.[32] They may inflict lockjaw by a blow, cause death, induce phthisis, and bring pestilence.[33] Shamans and medicine men may use them to secure revenge or haunt the living; and this again calls up the need for exorcism.[34] This gives rise to various devices and taboos, aiming at propitiating or deceiving the ghosts, such as change of names assigned to things belonging to the dead, or dropping out of the language words which contained the name borne in life, this going so far in some cases as to involve the destruction of huts, plantations, trees, and other possessions.[35] It is quite in keeping with the

[32] *Folk-lore*, ii. 420 ff., 431; Kloss, *In the Andamans*, p. 305; Declé, *Three years in Savage Africa*, pp. 236, 344.

[33] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 230; Weeks, *Congo Cannibals*, p. 266; Roscoe, *Baganda*, p. 100; Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, pp. 81 ff.; Crooke, *Tribes and Castes*, iii. 436.

[34] Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, pp. 81 ff.; Roscoe, *Baganda*, p. 126.

[35] Seligmann, *Melanesians*, pp. 631 ff.; *Cambridge Anthropological Expedition*, v. 250.

whole conception of things that ghosts should be especially dangerous at night.[36]

From all this, to anticipate slightly what is yet to come, fear of discarnate spirits may lead to a cult, a worship, which is apotropaic, deprecatory, or propitiatory in character. On the other hand, the sense of favors received or to come gives the *rationale* of a cultus which embodies more of gratitude and pleasure than of fear. With both these varieties of mental qualities attributed to ghosts, shared by them in common with non-human powers, it seems to require somewhat of ingenuity and a miscalculation or misappreciation of native human traits to force one to derive all worship from fear.[37] *Timor fecit deos* is now hardly tenable in its original sense, in view of abundance of ascertained facts. Most of the animals, especially those domesticated, display amiable traits, including gratitude. We can hardly hold, therefore, that man, whether the product of evolution or of special creation, developed one of his noblest exercises, that of worship, from a sense of fear alone.

[36] Neuhass, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. 64, 147.

[37] Chalmers and Gill, *Work and Adventure*, pp. 84 ff.

XIII

THE HOME OF THE SOUL

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THE HOME OF THE SOUL

WE have seen that to the discarnate spirit is attributed much of fondness for things to which it had become accustomed in its earthly life. The idea of preference or liking comes out frequently in connection with its *post-mortem* habitat. Of course, it is to be remembered that the eschatology of primitive peoples is vague and by no means consistent. Indeed, when it is recalled that Christian eschatology is still in a confused state, when orthodox theologians are at odds as to the location of the soul between death and the judgment, even as to the time of the judgment, whether immediately after death or at some indefinitely distant time; when these doctors of the faith disagree as to the conscious existence or the "sleep" of the soul after death, as to its removal to heaven or hell on dissolution, and whether that heaven or hell is final or only temporary — one can hardly

expect primitive peoples, whose memory for history is short and their outlook and forecast vague and brief, to have a consecutive and sharply defined eschatology. Consequently we find variations innumerable in the conceptions of the soul's location, and a sort of warfare between the poor ghost's supposed preference and the desires of survivors.

It is quite normal that the spirit is credited with lingering affection for the home and the environment that so long harbored it, and makes the grave, which is, of course, in the immediate neighborhood, its favorite haunt and the body in the grave still its home. How persistent this primitive notion is may be verified in almost any rural community, where few indeed care to pass God's acre after dark without company. The prehistoric Mycenæans left in graves a groove by which evidently to pour the offerings to the ghosts; Egyptian tombs had channels by which *ka* or *ba* could have access to and egress from the embalmed body. Even in Mongolia these apertures are found in the graves, though there they are placed at the sides, showing that they were intended for the spirit's exit and entrance and not to facilitate the placing

of provisions — food and drink.[1] Many primitive peoples entertain beliefs parallel to those indicated by these customs. Such are African tribes like the Baganda, certain Australians, and many others.[2] From this conception may arise the thought that souls wander around their old haunts and even make them impossible for dwellings, at least for a time; or they may frequent places having peculiar topographical features, where their clans foregather.[3] Sometimes this return is only temporary, limited to certain hours of the night, as for example, the case of some African ghosts, who are released between twelve and three in the morning — remember the ghost of Hamlet's father![4] In other cases there is alleged to be a time when the ghosts must quit finally their earthly haunts for a permanent abode elsewhere. Thus in New Guinea "it seems that the spirit does not find its way at once to its home; but wanders for some

[1] *NGM*, May 1913, p. 65.

[2] Roscoe, *The Baganda*, pp. 282 ff.; Howitt, *Native Tribes S. E. Australia*, pp. 434, 438–439, 455, 470; Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 232.

[3] Taplin, *Narrinyeri*, pp. 181 ff.; Thomas, *Report*, p. 38; Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, p. 76; Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, pp. 123, 126.

[4] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 232.

time about the places it was familiar with during the period it was connected with the body. It may be possible that the spirit does not finally leave its own haunts until the death feasts are finished, or at least that the people believe the spirit may be about, and likely to injure them, until they think a sufficient time has elapsed, and a sufficient number of death feasts have been held, and that then it is safe to close the series, to remove the tabu, and to give over the mourning." [5]

There is, however, in this conception left open the possibility of securing a brief visit from them for purposes that are supposed to serve the living. How easily out of this could develop the idea and practice of necromancy!

On the other hand one may support with abundant evidence the thesis that there is a quite general consensus to the effect that it is unseemly for departed spirits to inhabit the land where the living pass their earthly existence. It is widely believed that ghosts have their own land whither living mortals may not go, whence, also, spirits may not

[5] Newton, *In Far New Guinea*, p. 220; cf. Neuhass, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. 149 ff.

usually return, unless under highly exceptional circumstances. Still it must not be forgotten that a whole group of festivals and a host of folk customs, centering in mid-winter for the most part, have as their basis the idea that ghosts return annually and must be treated with respect, kindness, and hospitality. All Souls' Day is the survival in Christian custom of this belief.[6]

To the questions where and what the region of the dead is many tribes give various answers. Naturally man's wildest flights of imagination and fancy have played with this theme. Of course, much depends, in the answer that is given by any particular group of peoples, upon the geography of the region and the cosmography of the group. It is most natural, from the usual custom of burial, that a region beneath the earth should be in the thoughts of very diverse tribes and nations. There was placed the Babylonian "Land-of-no-Return," for the most part the Egyptian home of the dead, the Greek Hades, the resting place of natives of Hood Peninsula and other places in New Guinea, in Oceanica

[6] For convenient collections of cases, cf. Harrison, *Prolegomena*, *passim*, and Miles, *Christmas*, pp. 161 ff.

(Samoa) — to name only a few representative peoples.[7] On the other hand, it frequently happens that the place of souls is otherwise located: on a distant mountain, as with some natives of British New Guinea;[8] or where the sun sets (compare Egyptian ideas); or on an island far away;[9] or under the sea;[10] or in the heavens, either in some definitely designated luminary or in some indefinite locality (Omahas regard the Milky Way as the path to this home by which spirits pass in turn to and through seven spirit worlds).[11] At times the information is quite definite, as for example in parts of New Guinea.

"About Wedau and Wamira the spirits of the dead go eventually to some place to the eastward of Cape Frere, in a valley in the mountains called Iola, the approach to the abode of the spirits being through a hole in the ground. When the spirit arrives it is questioned at once, 'Where have you come

[7] *JAI*, xxviii (1899), 216 ff.; Neuhass, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. 149 ff.; Westervelt, *Legends of Maui*, p. 129.

[8] Seligmann, *Melanesians*, p. 192.

[9] Westervelt, *Legends of Maui*, pp. 129 ff.; Codrington, *Melanesians*, pp. 255 ff.; Frazer, *Immortality*, p. 192.

[10] Lambert, *Mœurs et superstitions*, pp. 13 ff.; Seligmann, *Melanesians*, pp. 655 ff.; Turner, *Samoa*, pp. 257–258.

[11] Fletcher and La Flesche, *27th Report*, etc., pp. 588–589.

from?' 'What have you come for?' just as every time you go into a village every one you meet asks you, 'Where are you going?' 'What are you after?' The newly arrived one says, 'I have come from Wedau' or 'Wamira,' as the case may be, or the answer may state more explicitly the section of the village, and 'Where else should I go except to my own people?' Then the question is asked, 'Who sent you?' and for answer the name of some sorcerer or witch is given, the one responsible for the death. The spirit is admitted to its new home, where it finds feasting and dancing, plenty of food, and apparently also some fighting, and should the spirit be killed, as some seem to think possible, during such fighting, then it is the end, there is no more life of such." [12]

It would be expected that ideas differ greatly as to the character of the spirit world. A wide group of unrelated peoples have looked on the place of the soul as melancholy and mournful, fitting the soul's unsubstantial character. The saying of Hezekiah, king of Israel, after he had recovered from a dangerous illness, here leaps into the mind:

[12] Newton, *In Far New Guinea*, p. 219.

"For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee:
They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.
The living, the living, he shall praise thee,
As I do this day."[13]

Such were the conceptions of Babylonians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans. A noted Greek hero is made to declare that he would rather be a lowly laborer on earth than have an exalted station among the dead. Adversely to this, not a few peoples patterned their ideas of future life on the present world. Such is the content of the notion in cases already cited[14] where primitive tribes mutilated foes to prevent the shades from taking revenge in the other world. And in many other instances the imagination has compassed only similar conceptions.[15] The Thay of Indo-China look on the next life as the counterpart of this.[16] The African Bakongo bury their dead late in the day so that the spirits may

[13] Isa. 38: 18–19.

[14] Above, pp. 166 ff.

[15] Lambert, *Mœurs et superstitions*, pp. 13 ff.; Seligmann, *Melanesians*, pp. 655 ff.; Gomes, *Sea Dyaks of Borneo*, p. 208.

[16] *Anthropos*, ii (1907), 619.

arrive when the ghosts who preceded the present dead are home from their labor in the fields and may welcome the newcomer.[17] Other Africans know of ghost towns where the dead live and congregate as they did while on earth.[18] The Hausa ghosts have a city of their own, which has at least once been seen by a man who returned to tell the tale. A traveler saw four caravans crossing the desert in different directions, and followed one which seemed to him best. Suddenly he saw the ghost city in front of him, and in some way became cognizant of its nature. He hurriedly turned about and escaped. This was almost miraculous, for the spirits summon travelers from a caravan, and he who follows them to the ghost city never returns.[19] The ancient Egyptians conceived the land of the departed and their life as duplicating under happier conditions life on the Nile; indeed there was a celestial Nile land, where the social conditions which environed life on earth continued, even to the institution of slavery and subjection of the peasant to the noble. And exactly on a par with this state of ex-

[17] Weeks, *Primitive Bakongo*, p. 270.

[18] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, *passim*.

[19] Tremearne, *Ban of the Bori*, pp. 155–156.

pectation is the set of ideas regarding the "other side" entertained by South Sea people.[20] The custom in old Egypt, Japan, and elsewhere, and in modern Africa, of slaughtering wives, servants, slaves, and cattle to provide a retinue and a living for the dead in the spirit world is too well known to need substantiation here. We have already had before us[21] the curious custom of providing Ushabtiu in Egypt, and have seen the record of the institution of a similar custom in Japan, while the explanation given in China and Korea of the figures around the grave-mounds in those countries has also been cited. We have to remember in taking note of these customs in the Far East that the practice of magic there has for ages been almost as common and as inveterate as in Egypt.

We may further note that in parts of Fiji and New Guinea the souls of the departed are supposed to dwell in a great community, and the puberty ceremonies are by some construed as having reference to introduction to ancestral spirits in preparation for final union with them.[22]

[20] Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, p. 75.

[21] Above, pp. 130 ff.

[22] Frazer, *Belief in Immortality*, i. 434.

In some regions the golden age of man is placed beyond the grave. Some British New Guinea tribes think of the future life as a paradise, with no old age, sickness, crime, fighting, death, or evil spirits; where first marriages are reëstablished and children are born who reach maturity and maintain that condition with unabated strength and virility; and so it is with other South Sea islanders.[23]

The means of approach to this final abode varies, of course, with the grade of civilization, the location of the soul's home, and many other circumstances usually dependent on local conditions. If the home is on an island or across a river, a ferry may be conceived — thus Melanesians reproduce in part the ideas of the Greeks with their Charon and the Styx.[24] Others conceive the entrance to be through well-known caves or holes, and exploration of these by the reckless or foolhardy is discouraged by the belief that attempts at entrance will be punished by severe earthquakes.[25] Or a chasm is believed to separate

[23] Brown, *Melanesians and Polynesians*, pp. 443 ff.; Frazer, *Belief in Immortality*, i. 192; Seligmann, *Melanesians*, p. 192.

[24] Codrington, *Melanesians*, pp. 255 ff.

[25] Newton, *In Far New Guinea*, p. 219; Turner, *Samoa*, pp. 257–258.

the two worlds, spanned by a tree trunk, as among American Indians or some Melanesians (the latter must carry the figure of a frigate bird to ensure safe passage),[26] or with a higher development of culture the tree trunk becomes a bridge, the chasm hell, and the passage the trial of the soul.

While by far the preponderating belief among primitive peoples is that the dead, especially their ghosts, are to be gotten out of the way, and while the general feeling is one of fear, in occasional situations an enduring connection with them is desired, and especial efforts are made to bring this about. Thus some peoples in Africa, where nearly all shades of primitive thought may be discovered, are so anxious to secure this abiding presence of their dead that they cut off the head of the deceased and preserve it in the home. This is thought to secure the continuance of the presence of the favor of the dead patron, as he now becomes by this means.[27]

[26] Codrington, *Melanesians*, p. 257.

[27] Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, p. 674.

XIV

DESCENSUS AVERNI

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THE notion of the underworld as a prison place in which the dead are confined has given rise in many different centers to the thought of some daring mortal who breaks the law separating the two worlds, and visits the home of the dead, winning through by power of love, or sheer bravado and physical might or challenge, or by favor of the gods. The *Descensus Averni* is a widespread myth. Its earliest literary form meets us in pre-Semitic Babylonia in the story of Tammuz and Ishtar — now so well known that no extended narrative is here necessary.[1] A fairly close parallel to the Ishtar episode is found in far-away Japan, where the goddess Izanami died and her spouse Izanagi descended after her, broke the taboo concerning preservation of darkness (which is an element in so many cycles of folklore unconnected with the *Descen-*

[1] For the story, see most conveniently Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels*, pp. 121–131.

sus), and with difficulty escaped to the upper air, pursued by the revengeful goddess and her minions.[2] The retirement of the love-goddess Ishtar in Babylonia to the underworld is also paralleled by that of the sun-goddess in Japan, though it is "the rock-cave of heaven" in which the latter hides herself, and so brings darkness, as the absence of Ishtar brings lack of desire, on earth.[3] Hercules' famous exploit of descending and haling Cerberus, the snake-haired dog guardian of the shades who would fain return, to the upper air is in keeping with the hero's hardy and daring nature. The Babylonians having conceived so early the notion, it is not to be wondered at that the Mandaeans, who took over so much of Babylonian custom and mythology, should take over in the *descensus Averni* the exploit of Manda-da hayye.[4] Of course the Vergilian story of Æneas' descent at once recurs to the mind, as well as that of Vergil's imitator and disciple Dante.

But the idea is not confined to peoples so far along in culture. Maui, the culture hero of New Zealand and the South Sea, made the dread journey to meet his great ancestress —

[2] Aston, *Shinto*, p. 93. [3] *Ib.*, p. 100. [4] *NSH.*, vii. 147.

the lure here was merely material, a fish hook and to get fire.[5] The Etoi, a people of Africa, know of the same venturous enterprise with the taboo of eating ghost food, which connects the story in thought, though hardly in origin, with the Greek myth of the ravished Persephone, and with a story of quite different purport in Babylonia.[6] Among some New Guinean peoples there are chosen mortals that make the journey and return in safety.[7] Omaha Indians regard it as possible for the living, in a swoon, to visit the dread regions of the dead and return unscathed.[8] But these are the exceptions, and only heroes and gods, and even they under specially favoring auspices, like the command, behest, or permission of the chief god, visit the dead and are able to reascend from "The Land of No-Return."

[5] Westervelt, *Legends of Maui*, pp. 23, 48, 68 ff.
[6] Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 240, 336.
[7] Seligmann, *Melanesians*, pp. 655 ff.
[8] Fletcher and La Flesche, *27th Report*, etc., p. 589.

XV

WORSHIP

XV

WORSHIP

HOWEVER worship be defined, little reflection is needed to discern the basis of its beginnings in what has preceded. Worship implies in the worshiper fear, reverence, gratitude, veneration, homage, love, respect, admiration, or a complex of some or all of these; and in the object worshiped power, worth, or dignity, or a complex of them. As we moderns know it, and as the world has known it as far back as written traditions or remains of various sorts permit investigation, worship involves certain definite modes of action by worshipers, directed to or at the object of worship; and these modes of action tend to become stereotyped, or, to anticipate a little, to crystallize into ritual. And many reasons lead to the belief that this stereotyping began very early.

Man's conception of things being anthropopathic, he would regard them as he did men,

and in addition he would treat them, so far as circumstances and the nature of the case permitted, much as he did men. Since he thought of them as having senses to be tickled, appetites to be gratified, mentality to be reckoned with, temper to be made or kept placid and amicable, and power to be turned to good account or at least to be prevented from acting against him, he would deal with them as his experience and observation had taught him his own kind liked to be treated, and thus secure his own well-being. It could not have been long before the social element entered, tradition as to methods of accomplishing ends soon becoming a determining factor. Man had already discovered that the individuals of his own species differed greatly in qualities and power, and that different modes of procedure were either politic or necessary. Those weaker or less cunning than himself he could either disregard or render subservient. Those stronger and more resourceful would evoke fear or win respect, and to them he would concede what he must. The degree of respect or fear, expressed in terms of tribute or homage, would depend upon the conceived or actual disparity

between his powers and those of the others. How short a distance separates respect or homage from worship becomes evident when one considers the refinement in theology of the distinction of *dulia*, *hyperdulia*, and *latria* from each other, or when one notes the difficulty of distinguishing the results in the objective actions attending "veneration," "higher veneration," and "worship."[1] This same standard of action would apply to whatever grade or order of beings man actually dealt with or conceived himself as dealing with. As Professor King puts it:

"Granted that the idea of a superior personality once appears in the religious consciousness, it is easy to see that the problem of worship itself, and of different types of worship, is quite a simple one. It seems almost self-evident that the deity will be approached and treated precisely along the lines of intercourse within the group of worshipers. He will be bargained with, or treated with respect, because he is recognized as having the advantage in power. He will be flattered, offered gifts, feasted, and treated precisely as would occur in a human society

[1] Cf. *NSH.*, article "Dulia."

if any member were felt to surpass the rest in some important type of excellence. In general, the modes of worship will be, first of all, repetitions of the acts called forth by the object or situation which has aroused the interest. In what better way could keepers of flocks conceive of honoring their god and keeping him interested in men than by the ordinary communal feast, of recognized importance in maintaining proper social relations on the human side? The peoples with whom witchcraft is of dominating importance will necessarily treat their deities after the manner of treating the human sorcerer." [2]

The expression of animistic thought in this relation is that what is pleasing to the worshiper will be regarded as pleasing to the object of devotion; what would effect the purpose in mind if applied to the subject is considered effectual applied to the object.[3]

Most likely the impression upon man most nearly (if not quite) universal made by any given object was that of relative power. The question that would then arise would be: Is this being favorable to me or adverse?

[2] King, *Development of Religion*, p. 257.

[3] Cf. Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, p. 14.

Will it use its power to help or hinder or injure? If the conception was that the object was propitious, gratitude, warming in time and with the supposed or real repetition of favors (again real or supposed) into respect, love, and admiration, would evoke homage or worship in its essential even though crude elements. If the object was conceived to be malign in disposition, the endeavor would naturally follow either to overawe or to propitiate. It would not take very long to discern here how magic in some of its aspects could arise. Threat or magic would be employed, in course of time, to overawe; on the other hand, blandishments of various sorts would be used to conciliate; or apotropaic performances might grow up to drive and keep away the power conceived as hostile, to prevent it from accomplishing ends unwelcome to man. Variety in treatment must have arisen from the supposition that there were grades of being and differences of disposition among these beings. Just as some men were more powerful in physique or resourceful in wiles, so with these other beings with whom man supposed himself in contact. That different kinds of power were conceived as existing

in the many spirits which man thought he perceived in his world is in the very forefront of the phenomena we have passed in review.

In what has preceded there is implicit an assumption that is not difficult to establish. This is that man's relation to beings other than himself was to a large extent, if not entirely, egoistic. He was concerned with what contributed to his own well-being as he understood it. Not overlooked here is the later stage when gens and tribe have entered with their idea of solidarity, in which the individual was to a certain extent submerged and so far extinguished. In this stage, indeed, the actions of the one, under penalty of his clan's displeasure or worse, were made to contribute to the weal of the whole, or, at the very least, to be devoid of harm or danger to it. Prior to this grade of culture — if psychology tell true its tale — the needs of self alone furnished the criterion of action, self including doubtless also family. And when the individual self was merged in the clan self, when the good of one was the good of all, and *vice versa*, the test of egoism, though now a better and larger quantity, still ruled. Dealings with not-man, as with man, con-

cerned the affairs of everyday life, were a matter of barter and exchange between man and the others. Two passages from the Hebrew scriptures here leap into the mind. Jacob (Gen. 28: 20–22) promises devotion to God on condition of receiving a certain continuing favor. The reverse of this picture appears in Deut. 28, where in return for definite religious performance prosperity is assured the people by their God. Philostratus makes Apollonius of Tyana declare that worship and sacrifice and the like are but a *quid pro quo*, human in its formulation. Indeed, Apollonius thought that large offerings made before any benefit was received from the god were suspicious, arguing guilt in the sacrificer and an attempt at bribery of the deity.[4] Such a condition as the understanding between mortal and deity, the driving of bargain with the god, can be ascertained as occurring all through history. Only late does altruism appear and thenceforth struggle for expression against odds.

Our chief concern here is to note the fact most pertinent to our line of investigation and implicit in the foregoing — that worship as

[4] Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, i. x.

registered by history and observation is most easily accounted for on an animistic basis. Worship, if our hypothesis be true, is but the sublimation (at first only slight) of sentiments that are wholly native to man's nature from the start. The difference in degree or intensity corresponds to the conceived difference in certain qualities found in the object. The higher worthfulness or helpfulness or potency found or conceived in an object commanded that initial stage of tribute, higher than was yielded to others, which developed in the course of time — how limited or extended we cannot tell — into what would now be conceded to be essentially worship.

Incidentally in the preceding discussion the fact has come out that man worshiped what we call inanimate objects in nature (stones, mountains, rivers, seas, the luminaries, the sky, the earth, and the like); individuals in the vegetable kingdom (the sacred tree, for example, indigenous in nearly all lands but necessarily varying in species with the latitude and longitude); others from the animal kingdom (snakes and monkeys and what not); imaginary beings good and bad, malign and benign; as well as living men and the souls of

the departed. We trace to animism the varied cults that have engaged the soul and spirit of man throughout time and all over the world. Idolatry in all its varieties and in the numerous connotations of the word needs little other explanation of its origin. Worship springs out of man's nature along with his efforts to satisfy his varied appetites of soul and body, and is formulated on the basis of his real or supposed experiences. To use a word that sums up luminously the entire situation, man is incorrigibly theotropic, his thoughts have ever turned Godward. The element that was lacking was judgment of the things he chose as objects of service, perception of what was worthy of adoration, realization of a true standard of values.

It is not our purpose to trace in minutiae the development of cult. We are concerned here solely with the phenomenology and implications of animism, not with the unfolding of all that results. It would indeed be interesting to follow out the complexity of cult, to show how it came to cover so large a portion of life, unfolding into exacting ritual, and embracing alike the insignificant details and the momentous crises of existence. We should

find fascinating the testimonies alike to common psychological trends — as in the almost universal cult of the serpent, easily interpreted upon physical grounds — and to racial peculiarities which led to specific contributions which enriched later humanity, such as the Greek devotion to the beautiful and the Roman passion for legal formulation. But this belongs to a different line of discussion.

We must, however, glance at two elements in the case — conservatism and the social factor.

By the first is meant that fear to change methods and formulæ (whether of words or of action) which, however wrongly (because of man's major fallacy, *post hoc propter hoc*), were supposed to have efficacy. For the existence of this there is abundant testimony. From all quarters to observers of procedure which to them, in their advanced stage of culture, seems inherently irrational, who ask: Why do you do this? or, Why do you do it this way? the almost invariable answer comes, Our fathers taught us to do it. Often there is attached a further reason, clearly mythological or else supported by some supposedly conclusive proof from experience, such as: If

we did not, this or that dreadful thing would happen just as it did to so and so who did it another way or did not do it at all. In Nias (Malaysia) in case of epidemic the cause is often found in a desertion of the old ways, and a renewal of vows to return to the earlier order of things is believed to remove the trouble.[5] Among the Pueblos the working of this principle has been observed.

"'Of the two great forces which have lifted humanity to the present plane of civilization — imitation and invention — the latter has been almost wholly suppressed by the Pueblos.'[6] The result is exact reproduction in both industry and religion."[7]

And Todd's testimony is given again as follows: "Oral traditions and the 'customs that are written within the book' . . . form the social matrix and make up by far the larger part of that social heredity which is the very stuff of informal education, and the basis of formal pedagogy."[8] From a different branch of the American aborigines evidence of the ap-

[5] Frazer, *Scapegoat*, p. 115.

[6] Spencer, *Education of the Pueblo Child.*

[7] Todd, *The Primitive Family as an Educational Agency*, p. 183.

[8] Todd, *Primitive Family*, p. 178.

plication of this principle to ritual is given as follows: "Any mistake made in singing these (ritual) songs or in reciting the ritual (of the Omahas) resulted in the early death of the offender." [9]

The continuity of this extreme conservatism can be traced in the area of ritual down to our own times. Indeed it has become an axiom among investigators both of religion and of anthropology and folk-lore that the oldest living remains we have are to be found in ritual, whether of worship, work, or, strange to say, play. The Brahmins have enshrined in their writings the necessity of adhering with the utmost fidelity to the words and acts, and the very sequence of the same, to the end that the sacrifice may be effectual. It is a matter of history that Sumerian rituals which began to be formulated in Babylonia perhaps as early as the sixth or fifth millennium before Christ were employed for a thousand or more years after the Sumerian language had ceased to be spoken, and this in order to gain effectual approach to the gods. Several branches of the Christian Church still employ languages long defunct and unintelligible to the majority

[9] Fletcher and La Flesche, *Anthropological Report*, etc., p. 575.

of the worshipers, and this is done for no reason that is intelligible, or at least plausible, to those not of the communions referred to. Only a few years ago intense feeling was caused in Greece over the proposed rendering of the Greek of the New Testament into modern Greek. In various other ways might be demonstrated the tendency to a fixity in ways of thinking about things, in modes of action, and in methods of expression, and all this as a characteristic native to man in all stages of civilization and in all spheres of action.

The second element includes the complex results of many minds working on the same problem. An ever stronger emphasis upon the formative influence of the social factor in the development of mankind is laid by modern investigators in anthropology and religion. One way in which communal life worked was the observation of details, supposed to be of significance, which might or did escape the notice of individuals. A gesture in a dance, a chance occurrence in a ceremony, mere coincidence in some totally unrelated phenomena such as the presence of a variegated leaf or the simultaneous note of a bird or leap

of an insect — any of these or a thousand other details marked at the time might come to be considered essential parts or accompaniments of the performance, whatever it was, thereafter to be included or simulated whenever the results were sought again, with the assumption that omission imperilled those results. Here is one partial explanation of the growing complexity of ceremonial up to a certain point. It can be seen at once how conservatism steps in here to preserve the method of procedure thus arrived at.

But this social factor undoubtedly operated also in a different way. The ways of seeing and interpreting things differ among observers. Man is an argumentative animal. Opinions *pro* and *contra* passed, and one consequence must have been a series of compromises in which weight of opinion or authority produced finally the formulæ and methods most acceptable to the community. Here is one door by which probably entered what we know as progress. The interest of the community, clan, or tribe, we have seen, operated to restrict and limit individual choice and initiative. Society did at a certain stage, and perhaps much earlier than any period of

which we have direct evidence, regard itself as open to reactions from benefit or injury done to non-human beings through the agency of any one of its members. This being so, the individual must act with reference to the welfare of the whole. It is at this point pertinent therefore to point to the entrance of the ethical as distinct from what has so long been regarded as the religious. To examine this, however, would take us away from our theme, as it belongs in an entirely different field from that we now cultivate.

XVI

RESIDUA OF ANIMISM

XVI

RESIDUA OF ANIMISM

FINALLY, we may register — no more than that — a few of the beliefs and practices which, enduring through ages, were the direct legacy or proximate product of the animistic stage.

First, of course, is the precious discovery of the existence of soul in man, an inheritance whose value has been ever more clearly recognized as the centuries rolled by, until the supreme expression of that value was given by Jesus of Nazareth: What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? The growing perception of the soul's worth is measured in part by the development of the ideas of heaven and hell as that soul's reward or punishment. Anticipated bliss or sorrow was magnified in proportion to the enlarging estimates of the soul's worth. The Greek idea of a shadowy existence after death in a featureless place that almost voids the idea of locality could not abide with a

higher (Christian) estimate of soul values. Even the Egyptians had a nobler realization of those values, though it was nourished at great loss — it cost them a really noble conception of the being and nature of the gods.

Second, this conception of the soul thus recognized involves another noteworthy bequest of animism, the notion of the continued life of the soul beyond the grave. Primitive races are quite logical in their deduction of continued existence as an attribute or quality of soul. It has incidentally been noted in the preceding pages that whatever was conceived as possessing soul was also believed to exist beyond the grave. There the hunter, note, was conceived to pursue shade of deer or whatever animal had been the gain of his bow or spear in this life. So that it was not man in himself, apart from soul, that gained immortality — or whatever proportion of immortality the primitive had acquired the power to conceive — immortality belonged to soul itself.

If practical universality of belief and of desire for the thing itself proves a doctrine, no tenet of our faith has surer basis than this in existence after death. We have already seen that the idea of continuance, which is

the seed out of which the idea of real immortality germinated, is found among all primitive peoples. Moreover, all great religions but one have taken the idea into their bosoms and made it central. The exception is classic Buddhism. And the vigor and tenacity of the doctrine of conscious life beyond the grave has been too great for the later followers of even the Buddha. For later Buddhism too has its doctrine of heaven and hell in the forms of belief current for many centuries. Not even the doctrine of *karma*, in its most absolute form, could withstand the ardent longing of man and his invincible faith that he is more than a bundle of consequences to fall apart and cease to exist as an entity when once he had persuaded himself that such an effect was possible. Elsewhere than in Buddhism only sporadic agnostics have ventured a doubt or a denial of the doctrine. How insistent is the cry of humanity for the boon of a continued conscious endurance is evinced by this. In spite of the firm faith of Christians in immortality, the assurance of it (as it is sometimes expressed), this longing and this faith compel even them to look with desire upon results of investigations

like those of the Society for Psychical Research, if perchance scientific demonstration can be made to confirm what is now the product of belief.

The third legacy of animism is belief in superhuman powers. Whether we regard this from the standpoint of anthropology or culture, or from that of ethics or of religion, it is difficult to estimate, impossible to overestimate, its importance. How vast a power of restraint this belief has exerted as an inhibition upon the lower passions of man, and how great an impulse it has ever been to the growth and unfolding of his higher nature! While it is probably true that altruism has never in the history of the race been absent in at least germinal force — remember that it is not absent in even brute creation — even yet its greatest force as a determinative factor is manifested only in the highly cultured. The impression of the existence of higher powers, of superhuman or supernal forces, was necessary during the disciplinary or elementary stages of culture to control and to direct to beneficent ends human thinking and action. Moreover, as has already been suggested, angelology and demonology are traceable in

direct line to the set of conceptions we have been following in their manifestations in thought and action.

For these three greatest conceptions entertained by humanity the race has to thank the stage of culture we have been studying.

Besides the currents represented by the dominant ideas just particularized other thought channels exist in which flow streams so strong as to warrant the use of the term "instinctive." "I'm afraid to go home in the dark," for instance, is the voicing of a dread from which few are free. Granted that in many or most cases this fear is implanted in the young by tales of bogies or spirits told by injudicious parents or other associates, the psychologist can but note how readily the idea is assimilated and how difficult it is, even for the mature scientist (if he be frank with himself), to rise superior to the fear and to banish it utterly. The reason is, probably, that the mind is in this matter super-receptive. The channel has been worn in the thinking or emotions of hundreds of ancestors, and the grooves are transmitted. Open the sluice gates to the idea, and it flows a muddy stream through life.

The savage of the stone age, cowering over his campfire, casting fearful looks into the jungle all about him, hearing in "the thousand noises of the night the movements of myriads of spirits whose existence is to him a reality," transmitted a frightful heritage of terror to his far-off descendants. Against the effects of this heritage in the clear light of day and the illumination of science and knowledge men count themselves victors. But curiously the shades of night banish self-acquired knowledge, and the unknown and unseen open the gates of emotion to unspoken and unconfessed fears. In vain does the victim appeal to his own "common sense." He knows the "superstition" is "foolish," "unscientific." But the subconscious habit of thought, prenatally transmitted, smothers his knowledge, and, given the occasion and stimulus, dominates him in spite of himself.

From the standpoint of pedagogics not yet has sufficient allowance been made for this heritage of fear. Parents, nurses, and companions, mistakenly and often innocently, sow and cultivate these weeds in a soil all too well prepared by heritage. And the result is that instead of a beautiful garden spot of

trust and confidence and belief in the good, a jungle or morass of noxious fears and dreads mars for many the beauty of life.

Other residua less worthy, for the most part now happily matters of history, at least in the civilized world, have been hinted at in the preceding pages. Most of these may be classed under the head of superstitions, though we are to bear in mind that these too have, at least some of them, contributed to the advance of mankind.[1] They include the development and practice of totemism and taboo, of magic and divination with their nobler brother prophecy, of mythology and witchcraft, and of sacrifice in the ritual sense. When we have shown the nature of animism, we have laid at least one firm platform for the treatment of these, so far at least as their objective side is concerned. Then, too, the relative order or the contemporaneity of magic and religion — that vexed question — may receive illumination in pursuit of the consequences of the facts here exhibited. But to trace these developments is another task. Whether such phenomena as those of fetishism are primary

[1] Cf. Frazer, *Psyche's Task;* and *NSH.*, article "Superstition."

or secondary may also be possible of solution in the light we have gained; and the varieties of sacrifice fall easily into order as we start from its foundation in animism as shown in the facts here passed in review.

XVII

LITERATURE TO WHICH REFERENCE IS MADE IN THIS VOLUME

PERIODICALS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED

BW = *Biblical World.*
FL = *Folk-lore.*
FR = *Fortnightly Review.*
Gl = *Globus.*
ERE = Hastings, Selbie, and Gray, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.*
HR = *Homiletic Review.*
IA = *Indian Antiquary.*
IAE = *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie.*
JAI = *Journal of the Anthropological Institute.*
JRP = *Journal of Religious Psychology.*
NGM = *National Geographic Magazine.*
NSH = *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia.*

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